

GILMAN SQUARE

STATION AREA PLAN

**PUBLIC REVIEW
DRAFT**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority

The City would like to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of the various organizations and individuals that have participated in and supported the ongoing planning of the future Station Areas of the Green Line Extension project:

Friends of the Community Path (<http://pathfriends.org/>)

Groundwork Somerville (<http://groundworksomerville.org>)

Somerville Chamber of Commerce (<http://somervillechamber.org>)

Somerville Community Corporation (<http://somervillecdc.org/>)

Somerville Local First (<http://somervillelocalfirst.org>)

Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership (<http://somervillestep.org/>)

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Mayor Joe Curtatone poses with members of the Somerville Board of Aldermen and SomerVision Steering Committee following the Board's formal endorsement of SomerVision as the City's official Twenty-Year Comprehensive Plan.

“Planning for communities is like career or retirement planning for individuals: If you don’t set goals for where you want to be, it is almost certain that you won’t get there.”

1

IT BEGINS WITH A “SOMERVISION”

Great communities don't happen by accident. Hundreds and thousands of individual people make decisions that shape how a city looks, feels, and functions. Those decisions can work in harmony or they can work in conflict. Successful places are usually the ones that are proactive about planning for the future.

Planning for communities is like retirement planning for individuals: if you don't set goals for where you want to be, it is almost certain you won't get there. Like individual families, communities have their own unique characteristics and individual needs. In both cases, a desired outcome should be identified after careful thought is given to alternatives so that a coordinated series of actions can be taken to achieve a goal.

This Station Area Plan is a road map for revitalization of the Gilman Square neighborhood. The purpose of the plan is to shape both public and private investment that will coincide with the arrival of the Green Line rapid transit system. Recommendations presented in this plan are the result of an innovative form of community outreach that has two objectives: to distill the goals, policies, and actions of Somerville's comprehensive master plan, SomerVision, at the neighborhood scale, and to directly involve residents in urban design and economic development decisions facing their neighborhood. Fundamentally, the Gilman Square plan is

focused on the principles of station area planning to maximize the environmental, economic, and social benefits of Transit Oriented Development while also addressing the challenges involved when any neighborhood experiences change.

SomerVision

In 2009, Mayor Joe Curtatone issued a challenge to Somerville's residents, business community and nonprofit organizations: to begin a three-year process of preparing Somerville's first-ever Comprehensive Plan. Even though Somerville has a wonderful tradition of public participation in government, and even though we pride ourselves on using cutting-edge techniques in public policy, Somerville had never taken the steps to prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the future.

The SomerVision process was structured to build consensus around strategies to preserve Somerville's identity as an accessible, mixed-income, multicultural city, while at the same time identifying an actionable policy agenda to invite and leverage public and private investment in transit-oriented development. The four-year process was managed in-house by the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development, which helped generate trust and buy-in among residents and community partners.

As a first step, a series of ten public workshops were held to

discuss Somerville's history and contemporary statistical data. City planners researched statistics on demographics, housing, economics and other topics, and went to neighborhood meetings all over Somerville to discuss the results with residents. The idea was to promote shared learning: community members would have access to the best statistical information available, and City staff learned which issues were most important for different stakeholders. The results were published as in a series of five "Trends Reports", each of roughly 100 pages.

For the next phase of work, a 60 member Steering Committee comprised of residents, business owners, nonprofit agencies, and elected officials was assembled. Members were nominated by each advocacy group to make sure that diverse opinions and priorities would be present on the Steering Committee. Over the next three years, more than 60 public meetings were held using creative public engagement techniques, including multilingual interpreters, graphic recording, online and mailed surveys, and unedited meeting broadcasts on community access television. Hundreds of Somerville residents saw their own ideas integrated into the process, yielding tremendous public buy-in for SomerVision's statement of values, vision statement, future land use map, and more than 500 goal, policies, and action statements.

SomerVision is based on our shared values, which reinforces our commitment to:

- Celebrate the *diversity* of our people, cultures, housing, and economy.
- Foster the character of residents, neighborhoods, hills, and squares, and the strength of our *community* spirit as expressed in our history, or cultural and social life, and our deep sense of civic pride.
- Invest in the growth of a resilient *economy* that is centered around transit, generates a wide variety of job opportunities, creates an active daytime population, supports independent local businesses, and secures fiscal self-sufficiency.
- Promote a dynamic urban streetscape that embraces public transportation, reduces dependence on the automobile, and that is *accessible*, inviting, and safe for all pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.
- Build a *sustainable* future through strong environmental leadership, balanced transportation modes, engaging recreational and community spaces, exceptional schools and educational opportunities, improves community health, varied and affordable housing options, and effective stewardship of our natural resources.
- Commit to *innovation* and affirm our responsibility to current and future generations in all of endeavours: business, technology, education, arts, and government.

Somerville's Comprehensive Plan creates clear expectations regarding neighborhood character and neighborhood change

through The SomerVision Map, which establishes a plan for growth in certain areas and neighborhood conservation in others. The map illustrates a shared understanding that the City and its partners in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors will work to "Conserve Somerville's great residential neighborhoods, enhance our funky squares and commercial corridors, and transform opportunity areas on the eastern and southern edges of Somerville".

The SomerVision Map is tied to the SomerVision Numbers, a series of aspirational targets for job creation, housing development and open space improvement. The SomerVision Steering Committee advocated the Comprehensive Plan to include these aspirational yet achievable performance measures, so that progress could be tracked over time. Somerville will seek to create:

- 30,000 new jobs
- 125 acres of publicly-accessible open space
- 6,000 new housing units - 1,200 permanently affordable
- 50% of new trips by transit, walking, or biking
- 85% of new development in transformative areas

The final element of the SomerVision Plan is an Implementation Plan. Six key areas of activity were identified to organize projects and programs that the City and its partners oversee in support of the Comprehensive Plan's 500 goals, policies and action statements. The six areas are:

- Quality of Life Strategies
- Housing Activities
- Sustainability Programs
- Infrastructure and Transportation Improvements
- Zoning Code Overhaul
- Station Area Planning

Somerville by Design

For generations, the typical system of municipal planning has sidelined the public, forcing what should be a dialogue about the future into an unproductive, top-down monologue. Critics of the status quo describe it as the "Decide- Present-Defend" model. Somerville by Design is different: it directly involves residents in urban design and economic development decisions facing their neighborhood, early on and in a meaningful way. Our model might be described as "Outreach-Dialogue-Decide-Implement". This new method for urban planning acknowledges that the best results usually occur when informed residents collaborate with public officials to establish a vision for their neighborhood's future. The vision is created from the ground up, using a series of predictable and transparent steps:

- Participants identify existing strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood
- Participants identify examples of future conditions that

match their values

- The design team produces a wide variety of design possibilities reflecting participant input
- Designs are edited and critiqued by participants
- Unsatisfactory concepts are deleted based on participant feedback
- Additional rounds of participant review and critique are conducted until consensus is reached
- Final recommendations are described in a plan document and illustrated using high-quality imagery

'Somerville by Design' takes SomerVision to the neighborhood scale. It continues our tradition of civic engagement, and connects it with best practices in planning and zoning that have emerged over the last fifteen years. Communities all over the world have learned that urban design is an effective basis for public dialogue, because people know and care how places look, feel, and function. New technologies are helping government to "crowd-source" the collection of valuable information, and the production of creative ideas. By documenting these ideas in a visual format, the City and its partners can build and maintain public enthusiasm for projects and programs that are consistent with SomerVision's framework of conserving Somerville's great residential neighborhoods, enhancing our funky squares and

commercial corridors, and transforming opportunity areas on the southern and eastern edges of the City.

Station Area Planning

SomerVision calls for design-based neighborhood plans to guide the future of Somerville's neighborhoods. Special priority is given to neighborhoods with existing or future rail transit, since they can serve as important economic engines and centers of neighborhood identity.

Despite the novelty of design based collaborative neighborhood plans, the idea is not at all unique in Somerville's past. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, residents, businesspersons, and public officials advocated for the MBTA Red Line subway to be routed through Davis Square, since the subway was originally planned to bypass Somerville. This same group of community members realized that this public energy could be leveraged to produce a strategic plan for new investment throughout the Davis Square neighborhood. Mayor Gene Brune shared that vision, and after several years of collaborative planning, the "1982 Davis Square Action Plan" was published. Many of Davis Square's signature public spaces, as well as key transit-oriented development projects are the direct result of this neighborhood plan - which illustrates the benefits that a grass-roots, physical design planning process can offer.

EVENT FLYER

Somerville *by* DESIGN

STATION AREA PLANNING SERIES

GILMAN SQUARE • LOWELL ST. STATION • MAGOUN SQUARE • BALL SQUARE

www.somervillebydesign.com

OCTOBER 17
Visioning Session

NOVEMBER 28 & 29
Design Charrette

JANUARY 8
Plan Presentation

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor

Today, the MBTA is extending Green Line trolley service through Somerville, and several of our neighborhoods are getting the opportunity similar to the one that took place in Davis Square thirty years ago. Green Line stations at Union Square and Washington Street are scheduled to open for service in late 2016 or early 2017. Stations at Gilman Square, Lowell Street / Magoun Square and Ball Square are scheduled to open in early 2019. And the Green Line Extension will terminate at Mystic Valley Parkway between roughly 2020 and 2022. A landmark Community Challenge Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has given the City the resources needed to engage in station area planning.

Station area planning has become an industry best-practice around the country. Public transit service creates new demand for safe, attractive, and accessible streets, since every transit trip begins and/or ends as a walking trip. Typically, new transit service also increases demand for nearby residential and commercial space. Cities and towns have learned that creating a strategic plan for the station area neighborhood can help steer new investment in ways that maximize the quality-of-life benefits for existing residents, future residents, and the business community.

Since new mass transit service often makes nearby real estate more attractive for reinvestment, station area planning is typically used to set expectations for “transit oriented development”. This term refers to new development that uses very specific planning and design techniques to promote walkability and maximize the value of public transportation. Transit oriented development can provide a number of environmental, economic, and social benefits for neighborhoods served by transit including:

- reduced automobile traffic and fuel consumption;
- improved air quality;
- efficient use of land;
- increased property values;
- reduced transportation costs for households;
- increased sales and property tax, real-estate lease and sales and fare-box revenues and business licensing fees;
- improved fitness and health for the community;
- reduced traffic accidents;
- enlarged labor markets for employers; and
- increases access to employment, goods & services, transportation, and housing options.

Transit oriented development can also present challenges that must be addressed to ensure that existing and future residents and business persons can share in the benefits of new transit service. One key challenge is ensuring that residential and commercial real estate continue to offer a range of space types and price points. As housing in a neighborhood becomes more attractive, rental and sale prices often increase. At the same time, unit sizes often decrease, since property owners

and developers have market incentives to offer studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units. These dynamics can result in fewer choices for families with children, seniors on fixed-income, and persons of low and moderate income.

The commercial real estate market in neighborhoods served by transit can experience similar pressures. Rental price points often rise, and the typical size of commercial spaces becomes larger. As a result, fewer types of businesses can efficiently operate in the neighborhood, and the variety of services and job opportunities for nearby residents can be reduced. For example, restaurants may be able to crowd out retailers, or national franchises may be able to crowd out independent businesses.

Station area planning represents a critical opportunity for a city or town to explore policies that encourage development while minimizing potential negative impacts. For example, new buildings around a transit station can be planned to include affordable housing, or as small business incubator spaces. Off-street parking standards for new development can be relaxed, because TOD projects require less parking. Zoning regulations can promote housing types suitable for families, and new civic spaces can be planned to serve neighborhood children who do not have yards sufficient for outdoor play.

Other policy responses will be more programmatic. Business development programs can support local entrepreneurs via training, marketing, or access to capital. Affordable housing programs such as first-time home-buyer assistance and lead abatement grants can be targeted to a station area. Successful communities often use station area planning to set clear expectations about how private market energy can fund community benefits. Mass transit projects involve hundreds of millions of dollars in public investment. Ensuring that local government can fairly and predictably capture some value from new private investment to enhance the community is critical to successful station area planning.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

All patterns of urban development are inherently linked to some forms of transportation. TOD is a model of land development that supports investments in public transportation infrastructure to produce neighborhoods that are compact, mixed-use, highly walkable, and equitable for people of all ages and incomes. Although every neighborhood should have these traits, TOD planning specifically leverages public transit as an asset for community development.

PRINCIPLES OF STATION AREA PLANNING

Local Plans, Local Input

The Somerville by Design planning philosophy focuses on utilizing the knowledge of local residents to create station area plans that reflect the needs and values of the community while supporting the regional transit system. The planning of each station area of the Green Line extension includes meaningful public outreach, education, and creative design in support of Somerville’s strong tradition of grass-roots community participation in civic affairs.

Get Walkability Right

Station area planning is rooted in the goal of making pedestrian trips to and from the stations of the Green Line Extension safe, convenient, and interesting. Accessible pedestrian infrastructure, mixed uses, and well designed facades will all build upon the foundation of small blocks and right-sized streets already existing in each station area to further promote walkability.

Plan for Complete Neighborhoods

A “Complete Neighborhood” is opportunity rich, with choices for housing and employment, as well as convenience retail, neighborhood schools, places of worship, health care providers, civic spaces, and public transportation. Although many of Somerville’s neighborhoods provide for residents daily needs, station area planning of the Green Line Extension corridor explores ways to fill in gaps that may exist.

Promote Appropriately Scaled Development

Public transit brings with it private investment in new jobs, services, and housing opportunities. Station area plans identify potential sites and the appropriate scale for infill development to shape the changes that transit brings according to residents vision for the future. The form of infill development must reflect the changes in travel behavior that transit brings, while maintaining typical neighborhood patterns and respectful transitions between mixed-use and residential properties.

Design Complete Streets

With such a limited land area, Somerville requires a “Complete Streets” approach to planning thoroughfares that are designed to safely balance the needs of pedestrians, transit riders, bicyclists, and drivers - a reality even more important in neighborhoods with transit. The incorporation of well-designed intersections, crossings, and sidewalks that provide safe mobility for all users, including the young, old, and mobility impaired is paramount to ensure accessibility to the station.

Address Diverse Housing Needs

While transit offers a substantial reduction in household transportation costs, market pressures in neighborhoods with transit may have the unintended consequence of reducing diversity in a neighborhood’s housing stock. Station Area planning provides direction for City policies that help ensure that families with children, fixed-income retirees, persons with disabilities, and young professionals have access to safe, accessible, and affordable housing choices.

Capture the Value of Transit Investments

The introduction of transit into a formerly under-served neighborhood creates a windfall of value due to proximity to the station and changing travel behaviors of local residents. Utilizing policy tools and public resources to capture some of that value for public benefit will help Somerville continue to provide excellent public services while spending the least amount of money per resident of any municipality in Massachusetts.

Prioritize Civic Space

Well-designed, publicly accessible civic spaces including parks and plazas, sidewalks and café seating, even multi-purpose lobby spaces will be critical to making the station areas of the Green Line Extension successful. Public spaces must be designed to be inviting and accessible for all users, reflect neighborhood identity, encourage social interaction, and add economic value for private property owners and the business community.

Get Smart about Parking Requirements

Parking requirements for properties near rapid transit stations should be based on actual demand, and be lower for neighborhoods with access to transit than in neighborhoods without. Similarly, stations within core neighborhoods should not be designed to serve regional “park and ride” commuters, a fact already recognized by the MBTA for new stations of the Green Line Extension within Somerville. In combination, these smart, transit-oriented parking strategies create value and improve quality-of-life for residents by encouraging transit use, walking, and bicycling.

Keep the Plan off the Shelf

Long-range plans are only as good as their implemented outcomes. Station area plans focus on diverse set of short-, medium-, and long-term actions that promote transit ridership, pedestrian activity, and economic self-sufficiency. Ambitious, but achievable, recommendations of the Green Line Extension station area plans will be evaluated periodically consistent with Somerville’s identity as a data-driven, results oriented municipality.



Mayor Joe Curtatone speaks at the Green Line Extension ground breaking with Governor Deval Patrick and other elected officials

“Somerville is one of the most densely populated cities in the United States, but we have only one rapid transit station”

2

THE GREEN LINE EXTENSION JUSTICE AT LAST

Somerville’s story is the story of transportation in America, and its relationship to economic competitiveness and quality-of-life. From the seventeenth century to the early twentieth century, public and private investments in roads, railways, and canals gave families and businesses a reason to invest in Somerville. Tens of thousands of homes were built, commercial and industrial activity flourished and community pride blossomed. The city grew to serve a vital role in the regional economy as a gateway for immigrants, a hub of diverse employment opportunities, and a center of production for goods that were shipped through out Boston and other nearby communities.

For years, Somerville residents and workers had choices in how to get around. The City was built of highly walkable neighborhoods that were serviced by efficient and economical public transportation. Heavy rail linked the population to nearby communities, and shared streets integrated well with the various forms of private transportation that existed at the time. By 1940, Somerville’s population had stabilized at roughly 100,000 residents, but behind the scenes, large-scale social and economic changes were occurring that would ultimately steer investment away from American cities for the next three generations. Federal policy began to actively discourage investment in urban places, with key examples including the Federal Highway Aid Act and the FHA mortgage

program that discouraged urban home buying. Private investment followed government incentives, and families and businesses migrated outward to suburban locations.

In Somerville, the effects were dramatic. Streetcar lines that had crisscrossed the city since 1890 were systematically ripped out and one by one, commuter rail service was discontinued at the City’s eight railway stations. In 1950, an urban boulevard known as the Fellsway was expanded into the massive elevated McGrath Highway and plans for Interstate 93 and the proposed, but later cancelled, Interstate 695 (Inner Belt Expressway) were developed. Neighborhoods suddenly became isolated from the larger urban fabric, and Somerville’s culture of walking gave way to an emerging automobile culture.

In response to these powerful trends, Somerville’s leaders tried to change with the times. Viewing the emerging suburbs as our primary competitor, the City’s elected leaders during the 1950’s and 1960’s enacted policies to create wider roads, huge surface parking lots, and isolated warehouse districts and strip malls. They viewed Somerville’s traditional urban fabric as a weakness rather than as a strength, but their attempts to make our City into a suburb backfired – Somerville continued to lose residents, businesses, and visitors.

Interestingly, it was during this period that early proposals for extending the Green Line through Somerville were first

published, although still with a focus on moving suburban commuters. A 1945 state-level commission on mass transit recommended that Green Line trolley service be extended along existing commuter rail right-of-way from Lechmere through Somerville all the way to Woburn. Core elements of this proposal were carried forward in subsequent studies during the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's. The concept was simple and consistent: public investment in rapid transit service would connect residents to jobs and services more efficiently than building new highways.

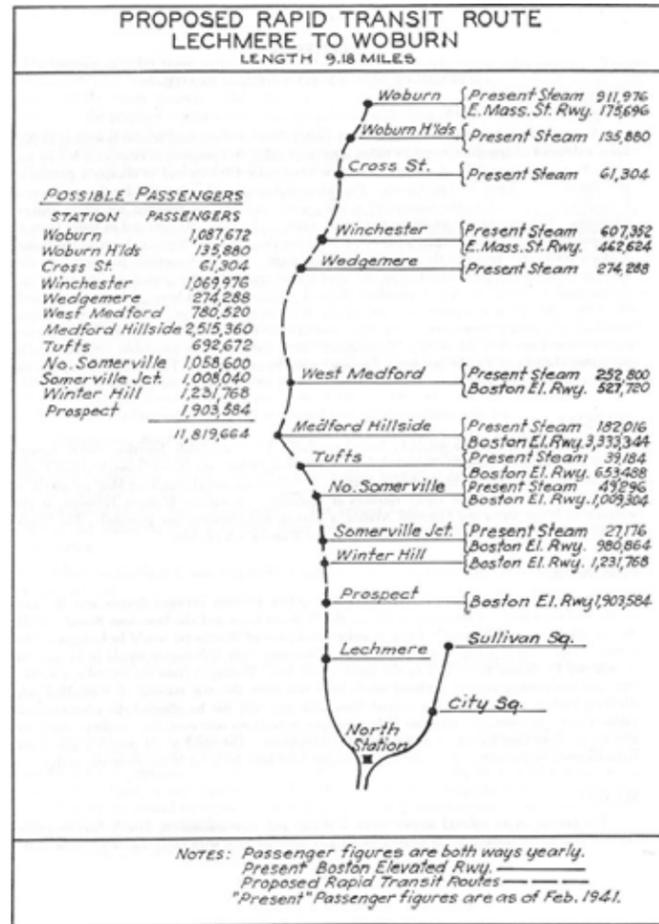
Ironically, it would take one of the largest highway projects in American history to make the Green Line real. The "Big Dig" was conceptualized in the 1970's to improve traffic flow and unlock development opportunities in downtown Boston, and by 1990 the project had advanced enough to begin discussions of environmental impacts. Recognizing that the highway project would cause major air pollution impacts, the

“By late 2016 or early 2017, the first new Green Line stations will be operating”

Commonwealth committed to several mass transit projects that would give area residents more non-automobile transportation choices. Completing Green Line extension through Somerville by December 2011 was a key portion of these commitments. The legal rationale for the Green Line Extension is related to the environmental and health burdens that Interstate Highway 93 (which carries a quarter-million cars on the average weekday) places on residents of Somerville, Medford, and Cambridge. When the full extension is completed to Route 16 / Mystic Valley Parkway, the MBTA projects that roughly 50,000 riders will use the Green Line every day. Automobile traffic is projected to drop by roughly 26,000 Vehicle Miles Traveled daily, and neighborhoods along Broadway, Mystic Avenue, Medford Street and Highland Avenue will be the major beneficiaries of cleaner air and reduced congestion.

Despite the legal commitments and economic benefits, engineering challenges and fiscal uncertainty contributed to many delays of the project. Not surprisingly, at key project milestones in 2004, 2007, and 2011 hundreds of Somerville residents and businesspersons came together to show support for the Green Line. In 2012, Governor Deval Patrick committed roughly \$500 million in state funding to the project, and a ground-breaking ceremony was held to kick off construction. By late 2016 or early 2017, the first three stations will be operating. By 2019, another four stations, including the station at Gilman Square, will be open for service.

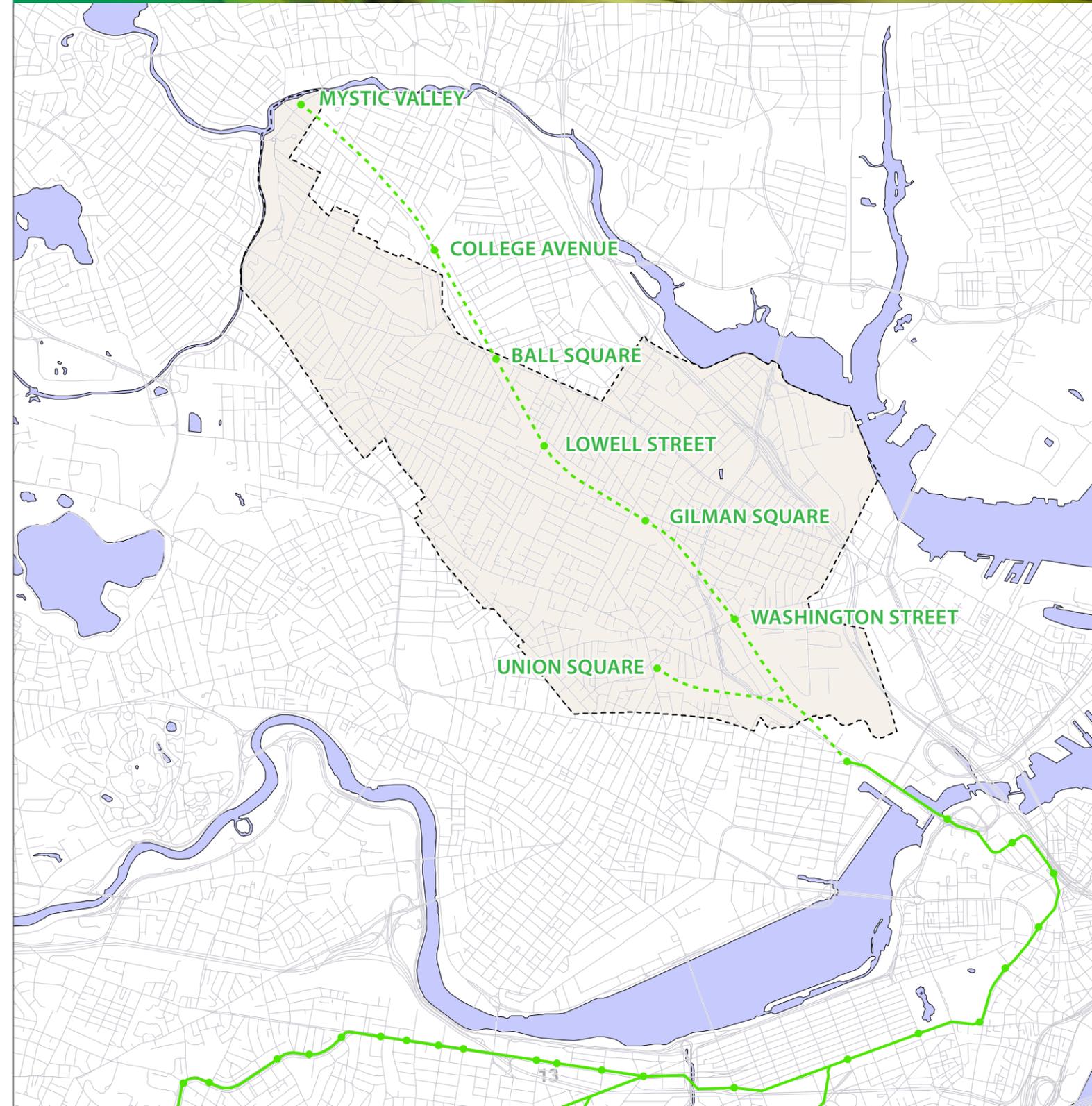
Today, Somerville remains one of the most densely



A 1945 map illustrating a potential route for an extension of the Green Line all the way to Woburn

populated cities in the United States, but we only have one rapid transit station to serve our residents and employers. Roughly 25% of households within the Green Line service area do not own an automobile. Environmental justice remains at the heart of the Green Line Extension project, however the recession has brought new attention to the economic benefits of investment in public transit. As demographic trends and consumer preferences swing back towards urban areas, mass transit service gives the Boston Metro region a leg up as we compete against more suburban regions like Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina or Silicon Valley, California to create good jobs and attract entrepreneurs from around the world. To build and sustain a twenty-first century economy, Massachusetts needs a twenty-first century transportation system.

For many Somerville residents, the most relevant benefits of the Green Line include simple quality-of-life improvements. A quicker trip downtown for work or pleasure. New parks, plazas and paths outside the stations. Shops and services sprouting up in Somerville's historic business districts. As the Commonwealth delivers on its long-standing promise, Somerville can celebrate a return to our roots.



STATION DESIGN

MBTA focuses on Neighborhood-Scale Form and Function

The Gilman Square station will be located on the south side of Medford Street, opposite the intersection of Pearl Street and Medford Street. The Green Line trolleys will run along the existing rail bed used by the Lowell commuter rail line. Like the existing commuter rail, there will be no at-grade street crossings. The Green Line tracks will be located on the southern side of the right-of-way.

Riders will be able to board an outbound train to Tufts University (and eventually the Mystic Valley Parkway terminus), or an inbound train to Lechmere, North Station and downtown Boston. Riders will be able to enter the station from three directions:

- An upper entrance (from the east, at the Medford Street bridge)
- A lower entrance (from the west, at a newly-created plaza at the corner of Medford Street and Pearl Street)
- A rear entrance (from the south, off an accessible path built into the hillside).

After entering the station from the upper or lower entrance, riders will pay a fare and proceed through an elevated passage that crosses over the Commuter Rail tracks, which will be located on the Medford Street side of the rail corridor. Escalators and elevators will bring riders down to a center-platform, with inbound Green Line trolleys stopping on one side and outbound trolleys stopping on the other.

A third station entrance has been designed for riders approaching the station from the neighborhoods around the intersection of Highland Avenue and School Street. An accessible path will be built across the hillside, parallel to the train tracks, that connects the School Street bridge to the station. Eventually, this accessible path will become part of the Somerville Community Path, which will run alongside the Green Line from the Lowell Street / Magoun Square station to Lechmere. The Community Path will provide a continuous link for walkers, joggers and bicyclists from downtown Boston's Charles River path network to the 14-mile Minuteman Commuter Bikeway running from Davis Square to the western suburbs of Arlington, Lexington and Bedford.

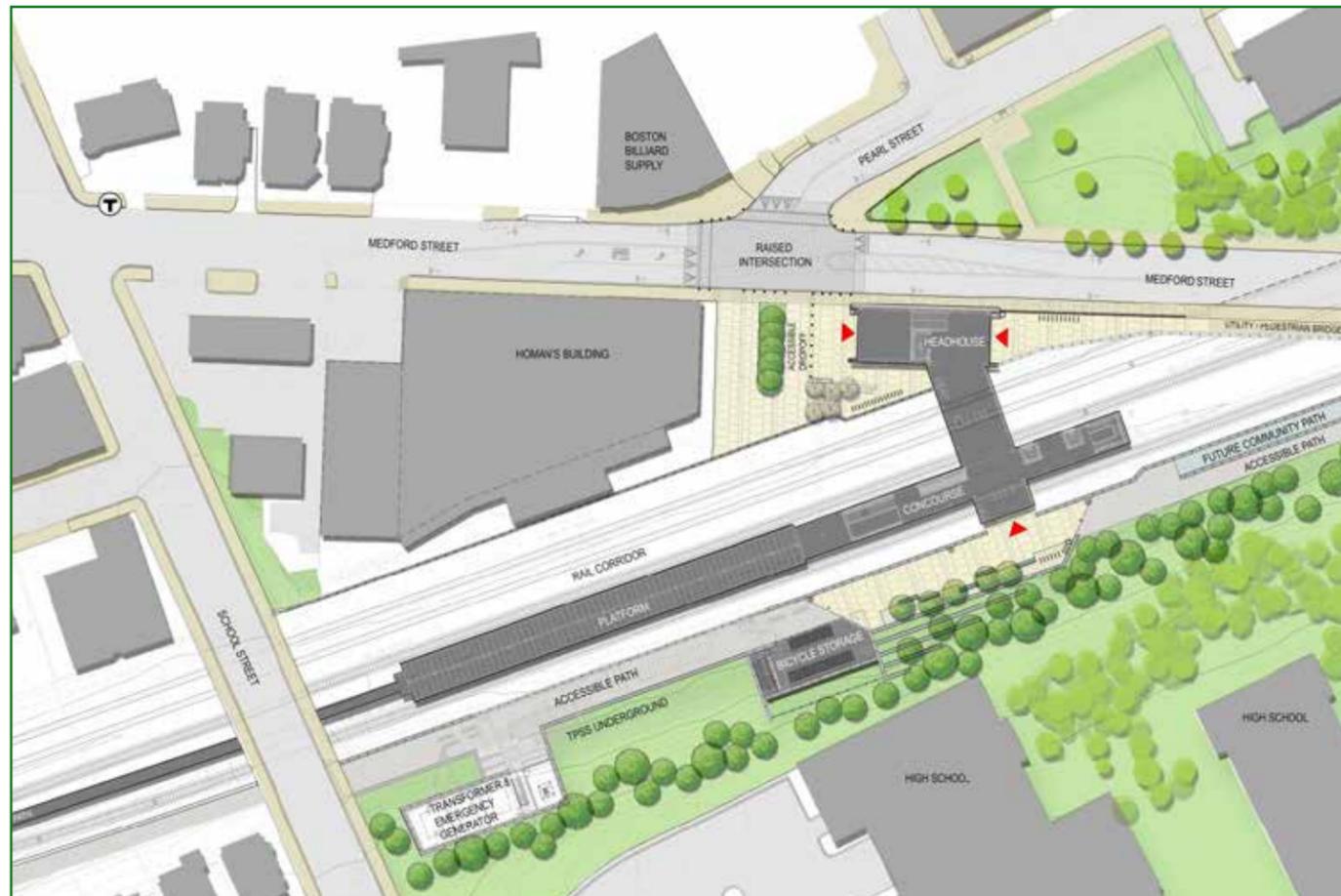
The station will include two new pieces of utility infrastructure. A storm water pump station will be built adjacent to the lower plaza, to help drain water from the train tracks. An electric power substation will also be built near the School Street bridge to provide power to the Green

Line trolleys. Based on resident feedback the MBTA's current design of this substation is far smaller and more integrated into the nearby landscape than previous design iterations.

All of the new Green Line stations are intended to function as "walk-up" stations that serve the immediate neighborhood around them. No parking lots or garages will be constructed by the MBTA. However, the lower plaza opposite the corner of Medford and Pearl has been designed to handle vans that serve the MBTA's "The Ride" para-transit program. Bicycle parking will be provided at the lower entrance and at the rear entrance.

"All of the Green Line Extension stations are intended to function as walk-up stations"

Site Plan at 60% design, current as of June 2013



Rendering of 60% design, current as of June 2013



GILMAN SQUARE

STATION

Medford St. at Marshall St.
Somerville, MA

TRANSFERS TO EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Government Center	0
Park Street/Downtown Crossing	0
Charles MGH	1
Kendall Square	1
Harvard Square	1
Longwood Medical	0

other info?

ESTIMATED FREQUENCY OF SERVICE

Average Trains/day 162

HEADWAYS (TIME BETWEEN TRAINS)

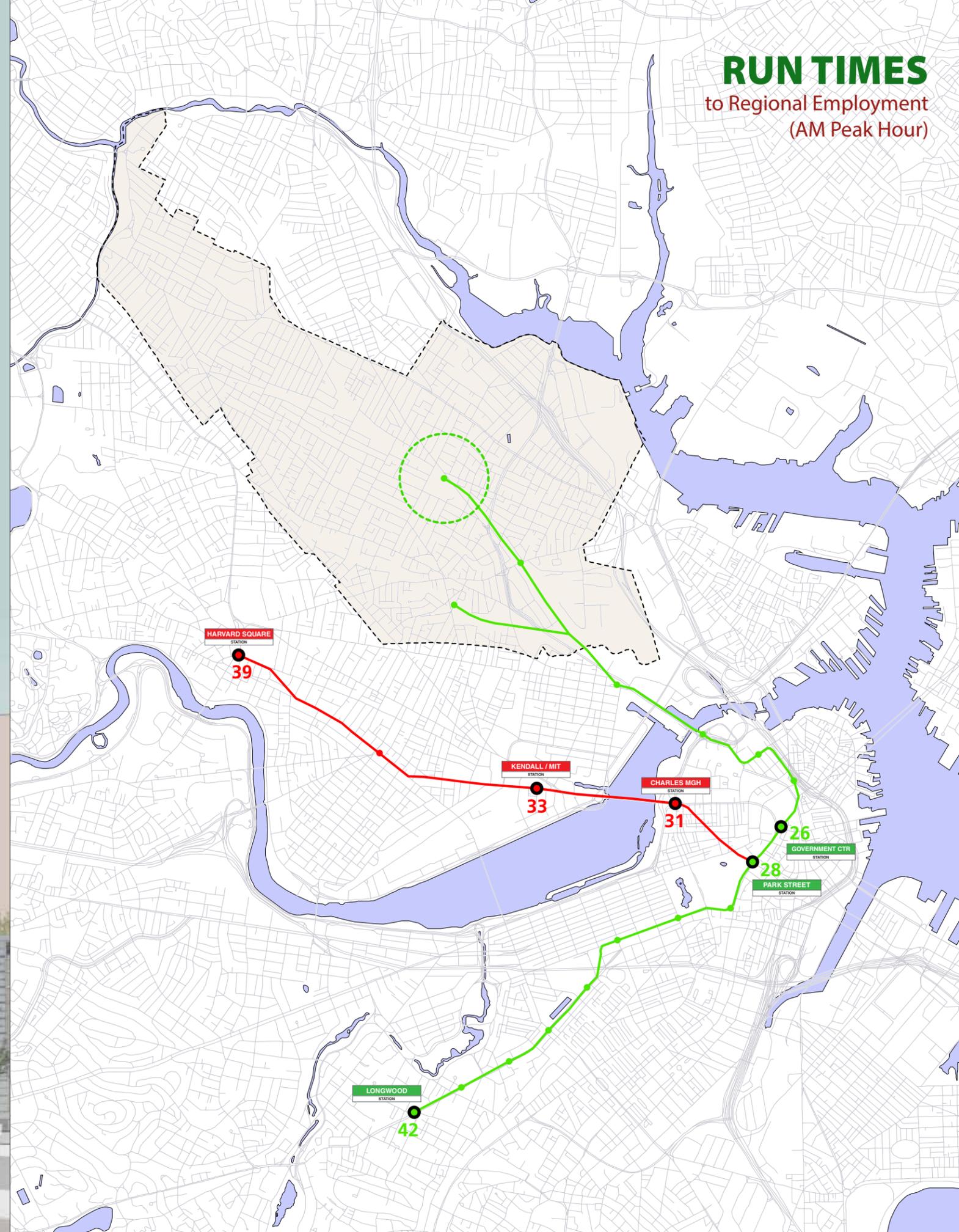
AM Peak-Time	5 minutes
AM Standard	10 minutes
PM Peak-Time	5 minutes
PM Standard	10 minutes
Late Night	13 minutes

ANTICIPATED RIDERSHIP

Boardings	3,930/day
Alightings	3,930/day

RUN TIMES

to Regional Employment
(AM Peak Hour)





Students of Somerville High School frequent the highly walkable streets of the Gilman Square Station Area

“Dense urban fabric characterizes the Gilman Square neighborhood”

3

GILMAN SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Gilman Square is a distinct neighborhood in the eastern part of Somerville. At its core, Gilman Square is the intersection of Medford Street, Pearl Street and Marshall Street, where an historic business district has existed since the middle of the nineteenth century. The Gilman Square Station Area Plan focuses on the area within a five- to ten-minute walk around the commercial core of Gilman Square and the future MBTA Green Line station.

A fine-grained fabric of residential streets extends outward in all directions from Gilman Square. The station area’s northern boundary is the historic Broadway commercial corridor. Key north-south streets connecting Broadway and Gilman Square include Thurston, Dartmouth, School, Marshall, and Walnut. To the east, the McGrath Highway represents a hard neighborhood boundary between Gilman Square and East Somerville, although important crossing points exist at the Pearl Street intersection, the Gilman Street tunnel and the Otis Street pedestrian footbridge. Directly south of Gilman Square is a large complex of civic buildings, including Somerville High School, Somerville City Hall and the Central Library. Highland Avenue is notable for its bus service and large apartment buildings, which transition to smaller-scale two- and three-family homes in the neighborhoods between Highland and Summer Street.

Gilman Square’s population is quite diverse. Compared with the rest of Somerville, Gilman Square has more youth (15%) and more seniors (12%), more persons of color (34%), and more residents for whom English is a second language. Housing stock is varied, and rental and sale rates are often more affordable than other Somerville neighborhoods (although prices have increased substantially over the past decade). Shopping and services are rather limited: basic convenience retail is present, but the neighborhood lacks a healthy and affordable grocery store.

Like many Somerville neighborhoods, Gilman Square has little usable public open space. The Winter Hill Community School has a blacktop schoolyard. The Marshall Street Playground and Otis Street Playground offer play structures suitable for small children. Central Hill park is a larger and more diversified public space, but is separated from Gilman Square by a steep hill. The City of Somerville made a major open space investment in 2009, creating Ed Leathers park on the site of an old factory at the corner of Walnut Street and Skilton Avenue. Ed Leathers Park has been very successful, and an expansion is currently underway.

LAND

AREA
2,649 ac

PEOPLE

TOTAL POPULATION
5,612

UNDER 18 (GILMAN)
824

UNDER 18 (SOMERVILLE)
8,218

NON-WHITE (GILMAN)
1,917

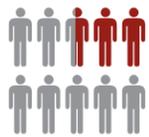
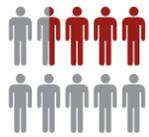
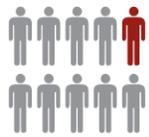
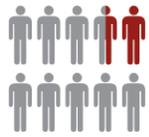
NON-WHITE (SOMERVILLE)
19,760

POPULATION DENSITY (GILMAN)
44.7 /acre

POPULATION DENSITY (SOMERVILLE)
28.6 /acre

RESIDENTIAL
92.9%

COMMERCIAL
7.2%



HOUSING

TOTAL HOUSING UNITS
2,176

HOUSING DENSITY (PER ACRE)
GILMAN
17.3 /acre

OCCUPANCY (PEOPLE / UNIT)
GILMAN
2.58

BEDROOMS / HOUSING UNIT
GILMAN
1.73 /unit

VACANCY RATE
GILMAN
3.0%

OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS (GILMAN)
653 (30%)

OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS (SOMERVILLE)
10,395 (32.4%)

RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS (GILMAN)
1,523 (70%)

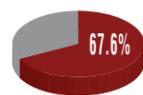
RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS (SOMERVILLE)
21,710

SOMERVILLE
12.73

SOMERVILLE
2.25

SOMERVILLE
1.79 /unit

SOMERVILLE
4.8%



TRANSPORTATION

REGISTERED VEHICLES
2,835

VEHICLES PER HOUSEHOLD
GILMAN
1.3

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (GILMAN)
27.7 million/year

CO₂ EMISSIONS (GILMAN)
14,700 tons/year

FUEL USE (GILMAN)
1.24 million gal./year

FUEL COST (GILMAN)
\$4.5 million/year

SOMERVILLE
1.4



In addition to carbon dioxide (CO₂), automobiles produce methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) from the tailpipe, as well as hydro fluorocarbon (HFC) emissions from leaking air conditioners. The emissions of these gases are small in comparison to CO₂; however, these gases are more potent greenhouse gases (they have a higher global warming potential) than CO₂.

PUBLIC REALM

CIVIC SPACE
12.2 acres PER RESIDENT
2.17 acres

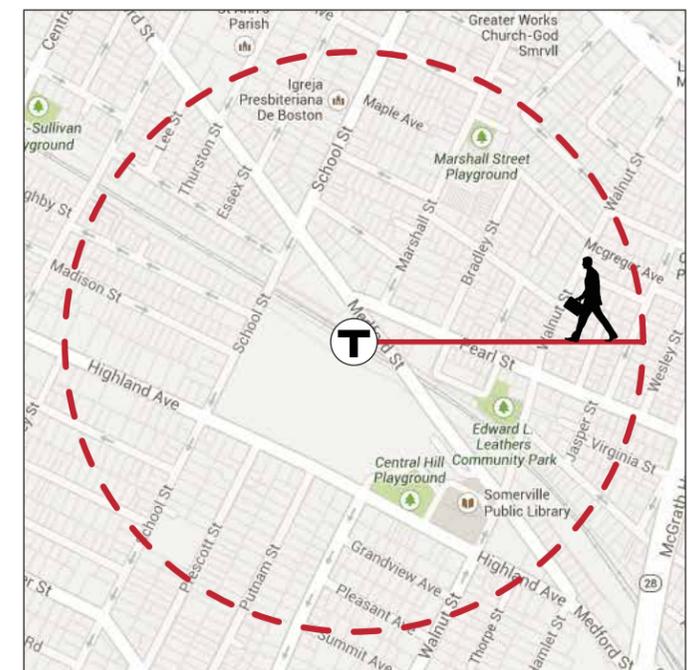
STREET TREES
607 CIVIC SPACE TREES
342

SIDEWALK
5.5 miles

CURB RAMPS
166

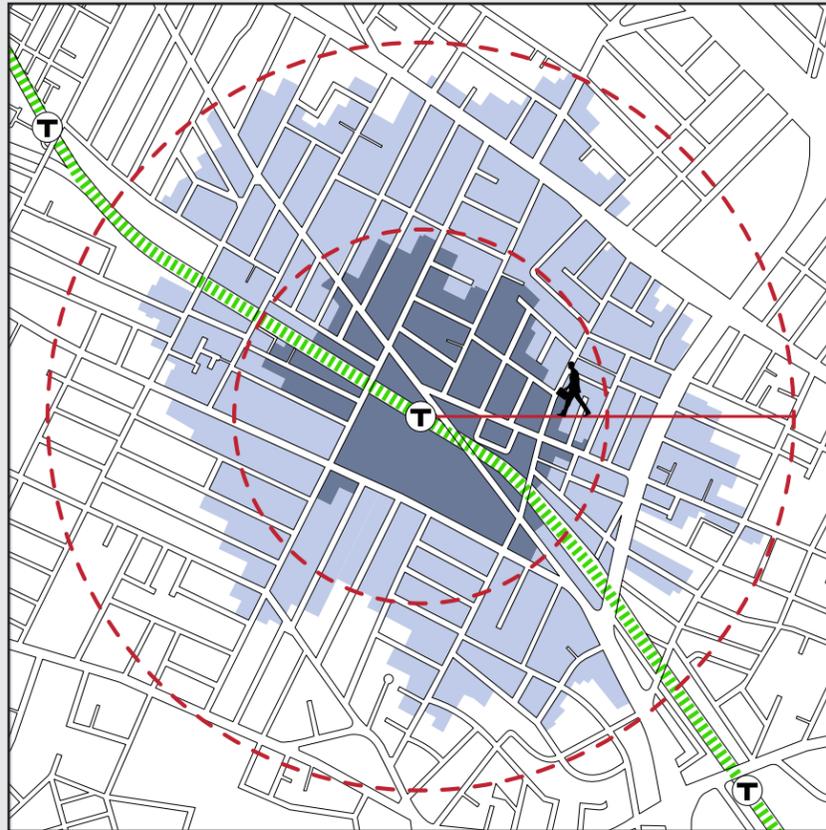
CROSSWALKS
75

STREET LIGHTS
236



WALKSHEDS

Walking distances are typically measured as a straight-line distance between two points. The uninterrupted street grid north of Gilman Square puts the corner of Broadway and Temple Street within a ten-minute walk of the Green Line station. But to the south, walking access is complicated by steep hillsides and the large buildings of Somerville High School. As a result, residents of Prescott Street or Putnam Street might live only a quarter-mile from the station, but their walking path actually covers a half-mile.



BIKING COMFORT

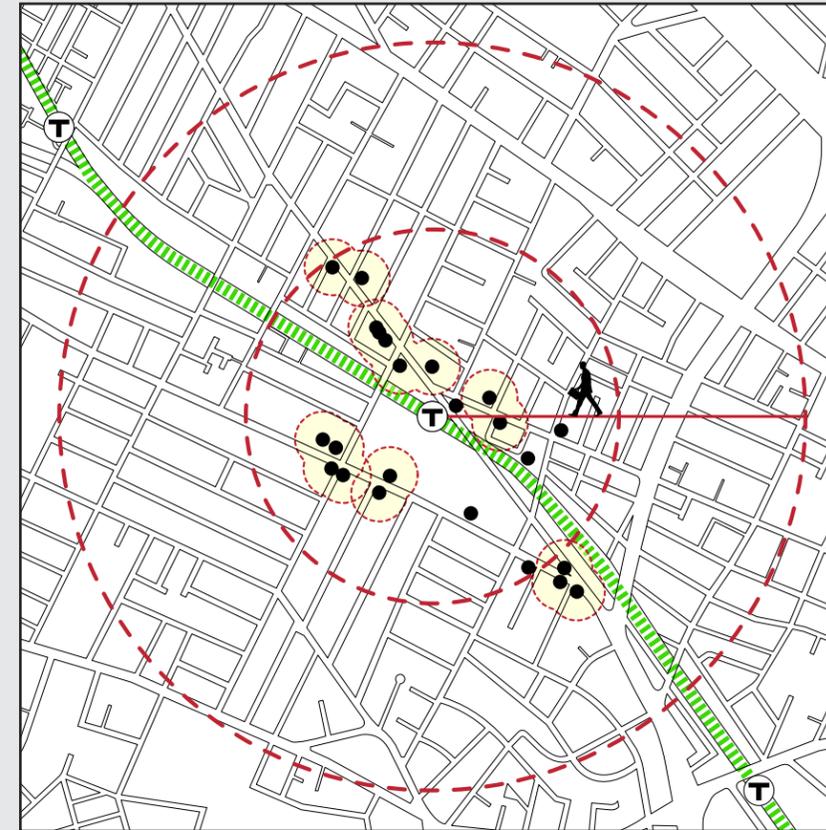
Somerville prides itself on being a bicycle-friendly city, but every rider has a different comfort level on city streets. On many residential blocks, narrow streets and infrequent traffic contribute to higher comfort levels.

Medford Street is rated as more comfortable than Highland Avenue, even though both streets have similar widths and similar traffic levels. Not surprisingly, Somerville residents rank wide, high-speed roads like Broadway and McGrath Highway very low in terms of comfort.



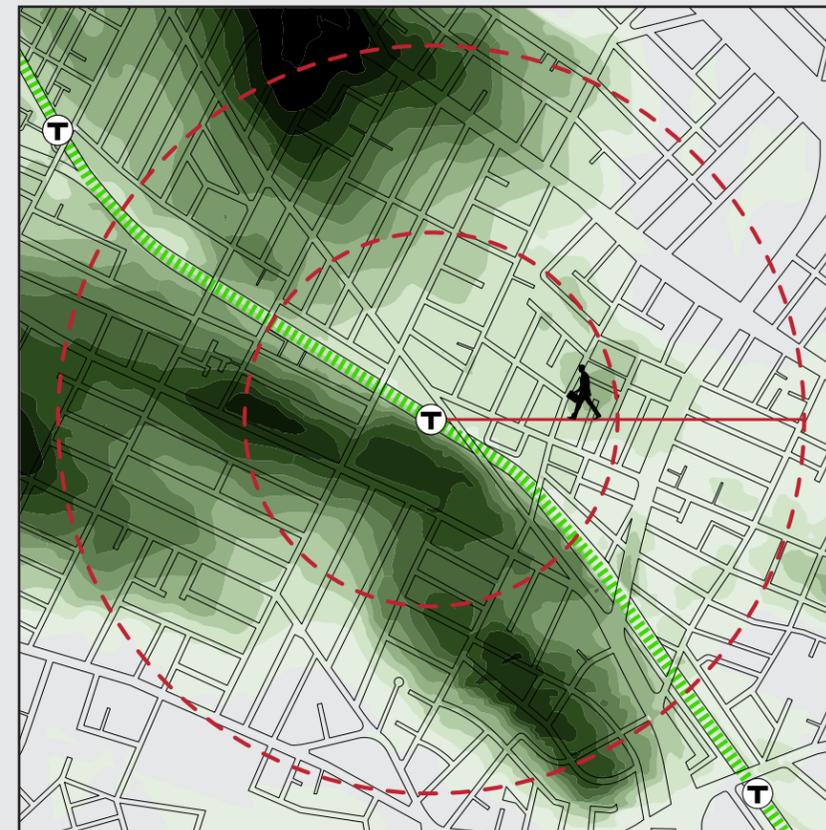
BUSINESSES

Complete Neighborhood Analysis is used to understand the local economy of a neighborhood by taking inventory of the existing businesses that cater to the daily and weekly needs of residents. Business activity in the core of Gilman Square clusters along Medford Street, with some peripheral activity at key intersections along Highland Avenue. In general, the market is dominated by convenience food, convenience retail, and salons of various types with a noticeable lack of sit down restaurants, coffee shops, and fresh groceries within a five-minute walk. “Completing the Neighborhood” would involve finding existing space or creating new space for these types of businesses to potentially open in Gilman Square.



TOPOGRAPHY

The steep hillside between Highland Avenue and Medford Street creates impressive views, but breaks up the walkability of the neighborhood. Steep slopes coming off the Medford Street bridge also present a challenge related to accessibility for persons with disabilities. Some of these challenges can be mitigated with roadway and sidewalk improvements, while others can be best dealt with using buildings. A physical design plan for the neighborhood can help set priorities and seek efficiencies between the two techniques.



HISTORY

An Original Transit-Oriented Business District

Gilman Square's roots as a walkable neighborhood run deep. The Lowell railroad was built through the area by 1850, and a wave of property subdivision and development quickly followed. By 1900, the square was established and a handsome square framed by one- to four-story commercial buildings had been constructed around the intersection of Medford Street and Pearl Street. Several remain to this day: the Knights of Malta building, the Litchfield Block, and Mad Oyster Studios.

Residential neighborhood fabric was often created block-by-block, as large landowners subdivided their holdings and hired builders to construct single-, two- and three-family homes. Much like today, the demand for housing was extreme, with a booming economy attracting new residents from around New England as well as around the world. Neighborhood residents had access to most essential goods and services within walking distance, with a vibrant mix of businesses in both Gilman Square and nearby Winter Hill.

By mid-century, powerful social and economic forces had started to undermine Gilman Square's neighborhood character. Public policy began to steer investment away from urban neighborhoods, and many families and business owners followed suit, beginning a forty-year exodus to the suburbs. Commuter rail service was discontinued, and Somerville's streetcar network was phased out.

During this period, some historic buildings were demolished (the Citizen building at the corner of Medford and Pearl, the Northeastern Junior High on Marshall Street, the Winter Hill rail station), while others were destroyed by fire and were not rebuilt (the Masonic Apartments at the corner of Pearl and Marshall). Medford Street and School Street became cut-through routes for regional automobile traffic. Fewer and fewer Somerville residents even knew that Gilman Square had a name, and a proud history as a neighborhood center.



LITCHFIELD BLOCK

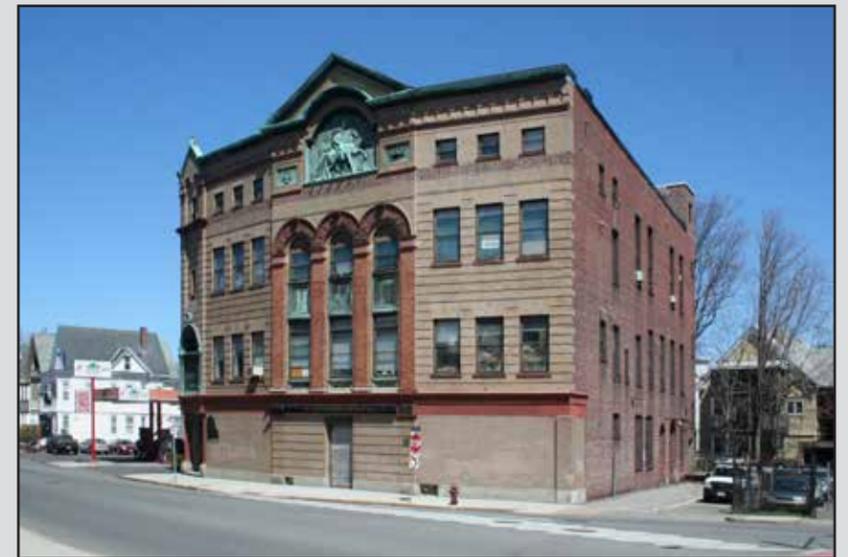
This handsome four-story, mixed-use building was constructed in 1900, and currently contains 12 residential apartments and 3,500 square feet of ground-floor commercial space. From roughly 1990 to 2009, the ground floor was occupied by the Paddock restaurant. Today, the space is being rehabilitated by award-winning chef Ana Sortun, and her new restaurant "Sarma" is expected to open in mid-late 2013.



KNIGHTS OF MALTA

This a four-story commercial building that was constructed in 1895 and was home to the Winter Hill Business College and later Fisher College during the early twentieth century.

Today, the building is a hub of economic activity for Gilman Square, with six different businesses operating inside. Many of these businesses are part of Somerville's creative economy: Boston Billiards, East Cambridge Piano, and Wooden Kiwi theater design and construction.



MAD OYSTER STUDIOS

Originally constructed in 1900, this three-story building was used as a telephone switching station for decades until it was purchased in 1999 and converted to artist studio space. Today, roughly 15 artists lease studio spaces ranging from 250 square feet to 750 square feet. The building serves as a community anchor, and is a popular destination during the annual Open Studios event hosted by the Somerville Arts Council.





Design Team leader Jeff Speck presents the illustration of the proposed new Gilman Square to the public at the final Plan Presentation.

“The process was a learning opportunity for the City, as much as it was an educational and problem solving exercise.”

4

GILMAN SQUARE A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

When the station area series of planning events was launched for the stations of the Green Line Extension, no one at the City knew what the outcome would be. The Somerville by Design methodology of “Outreach-Dilogue-Decide-Implament” was formulated to take advantage of the first-hand knowledge local residents have in developing a vision for the future of neighborhoods. The process was a learning opportunity for the City, as much as it was an educational and problem solving exercise.

Between October 2012 and January 2013, the City hosted a variety of public events including a visioning session, stakeholder meetings, open design studio, pin-up presentation, and final plan presentation to collaboratively involve residents in developing a vision for the neighborhood. Various stakeholders included Gilman Square residents, property owners, business operators, the MBTA, and a variety of community-based organizations each of whom voiced their opinions and put pen to paper with the design team. Common themes began to develop with a primary focus on returning Gilman Square to its functionality as a neighborhood center, similar to other secondary squares throughout the city - such as Teele or Ball Square.

A consensus seemed to exist that Gilman Square’s future should resemble its past: a neighborhood square that offered a mix of service, employment, cultural, and transportation

options to residents of the station area. New four-story, mixed use development called for in the core of the former business district to complement the surviving historic commercial buildings. Based on all of the public feedback generated during the planning process, consultants and city staff distilled the desires of residents into a series of nine broad objectives:

- Bring Back the Square
- Fill in the Gaps
- Promote Street Life
- Complete the Streets
- Invest in Civic Spaces
- Promote Attainable Housing
- Adopt Smart Parking Policy
- Reform Zoning Regulation
- Support the Local Economy

Each objective has multiple recommendations that include short-, medium-, and long-term actions to promote transit ridership, pedestrian activity, and economic self-sufficiency for the neighborhood. Overall, the objectives each contribute to achieving the principles of station area planning outlined previously.

BRING BACK THE SQUARE

An Amenity for Residents, Businesses, and Visitors

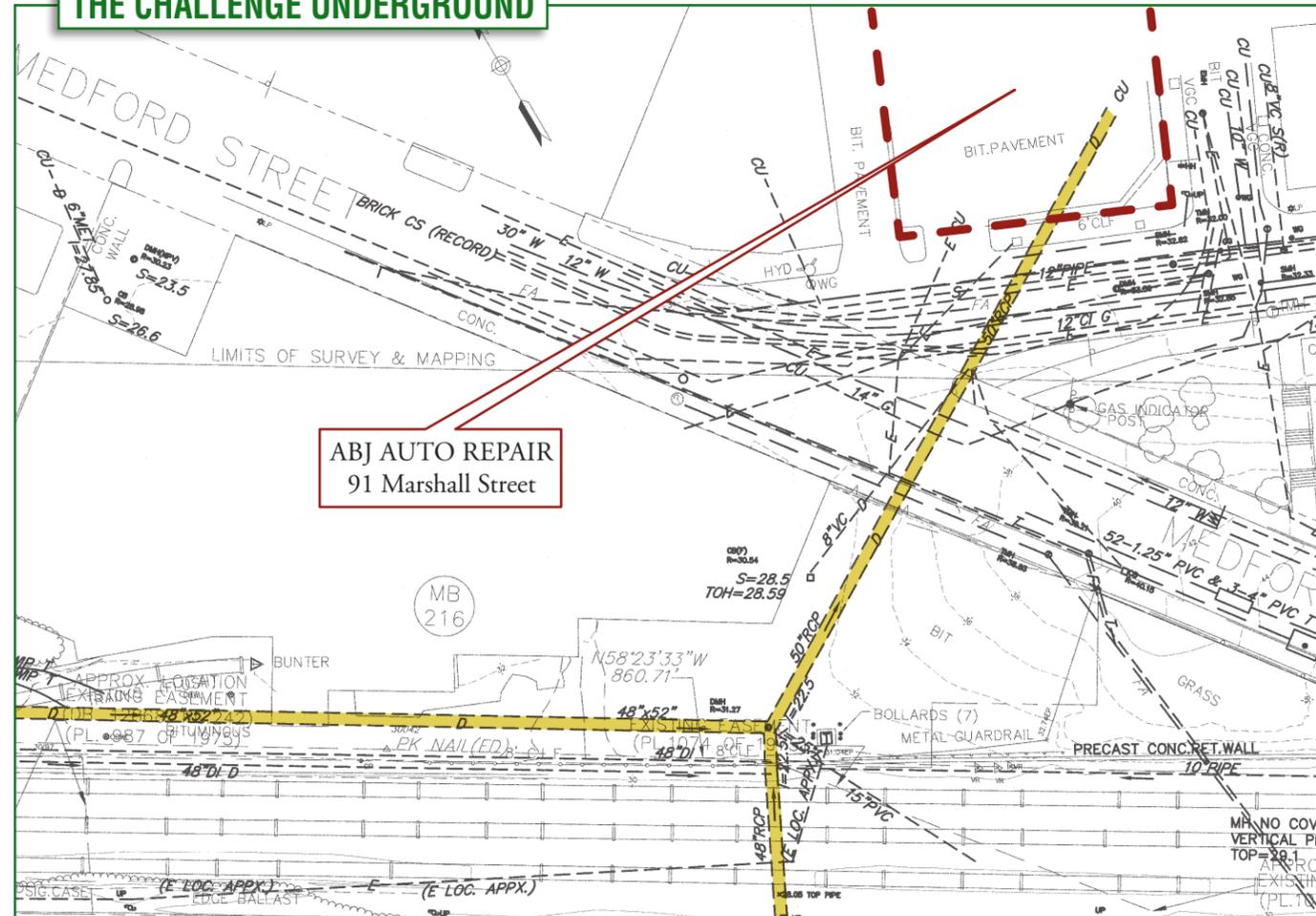
Although the majority of residents in the Gilman Square station area live within a five-minute walk of some type of open space (aka civic space), the area is relatively under served in terms of the total amount of space available to residents at 2.34 acres/1000 residents, slightly below the City-wide average. With a strong interest in increasing the amount of space available in the area, participants of the planning process identified the triangular green space at the intersection of Medford, Pearl, and Marshall streets as deserving of a new design that might better serve the needs of the community.

When designers began looking at the potential of the green space, they were altered to a challenge associated with a nearby property that would end up playing a key role in this plan's most popular recommendation. Engineers from the MBTA identified a large storm drain running from the train tracks northeast underneath a nearby business, ABJ Auto Repair. The large piece of infrastructure running under the southeast corner of the site would prevent any type of construction from being built on top due to potential maintenance problems.

Knowing that the MBTA's plan for construction of Gilman Square station included a realignment of the Pearl and Medford intersection, designers created a new configuration for the intersection that aligned the storm water pipe under a roadway instead of building site, reshaped the parcel of land home to ABJ Auto Repair, and created a redesigned public space at the core of the neighborhood. In addition to creating a public square in place of the underutilized, triangular space existing today, the concept creates a more valuable redevelopment opportunity for ABJ Auto's property owner through a swap of land from City right of way.

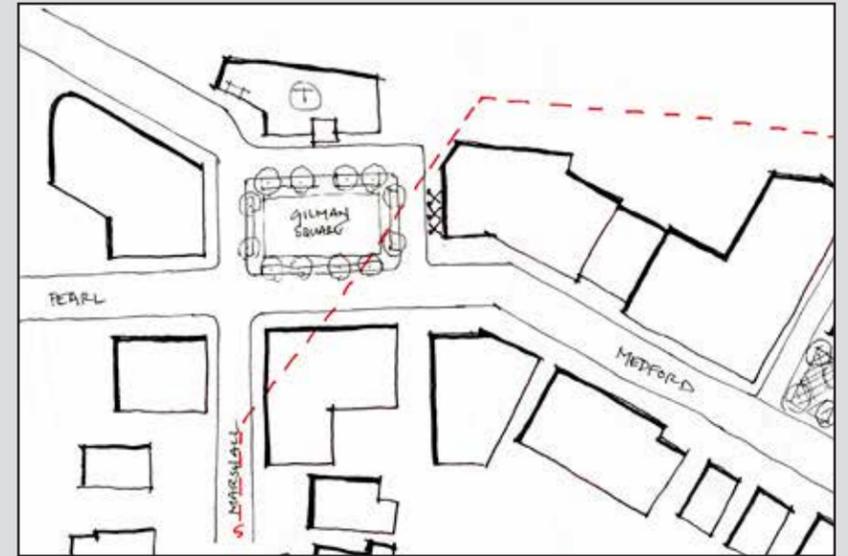
Based on positive feedback from participants, the primary recommendation of this plan is to design, finance, and construct a new "Gilman Square" civic space. The effort will be a multi-year endeavour involving multiple partners. State and federal funding sources will need to be explored, the project will need to be added to the City's Capital Improvement Plan, and community partners will need to be identified to help manage the space if it is to truly be a central gathering space and focal point for the neighborhood.

THE CHALLENGE UNDERGROUND



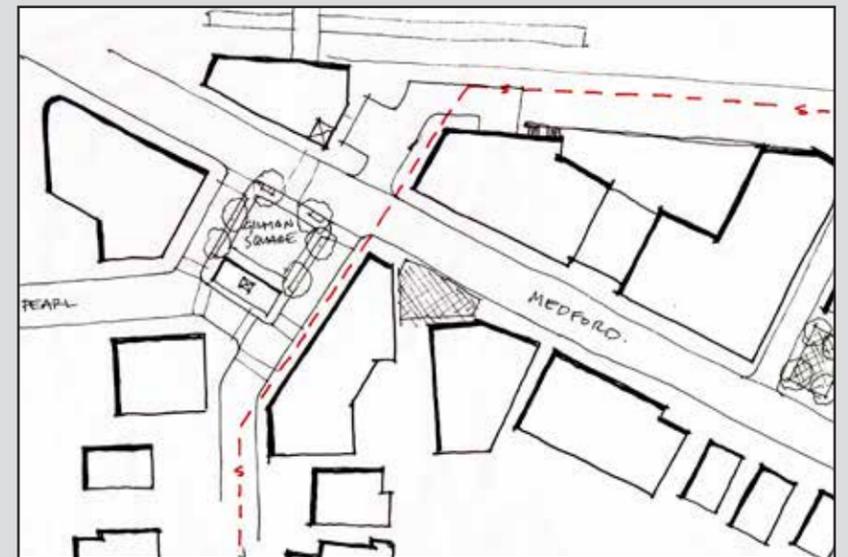
SQUARE CONCEPT #1

Based on public ideas shared at the October kickoff event, the design team had sketched a new building on the auto repair lot at the corner of Pearl Street and Marshall Street. The first sketch out created a new square in front of the Green Line station to slow traffic and facilitate design of accessible street crossings and para transit drop-off. Pearl Street was kept in its current alignment.



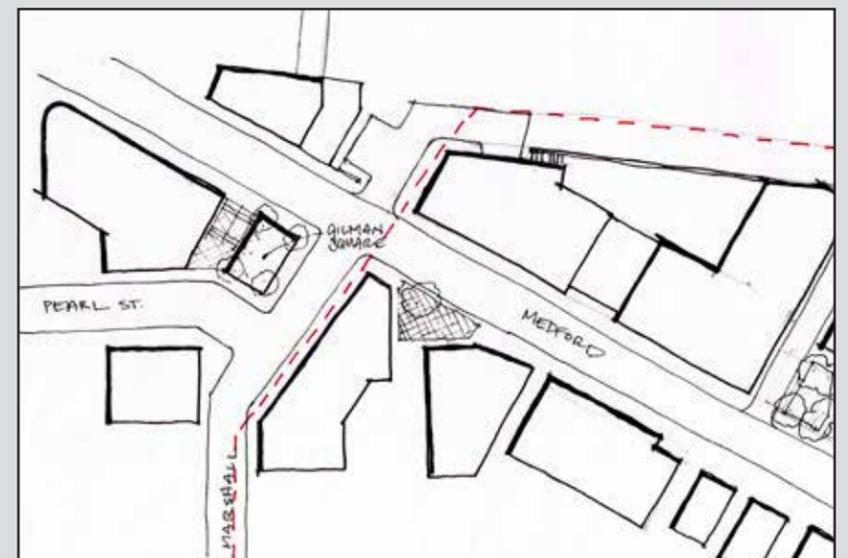
SQUARE CONCEPT #2

After learning that it would be impossible to build over the storm drain, and prohibitively expensive to move the pipe, the design team shifted the building so that it paralleled the storm drain. Next, the roadways were realigned and the public square was shifted.



SQUARE CONCEPT #3

This variation acknowledges that the slopes leading from Medford Street to Pearl Street (where the concrete stairs are located today) may be too steep for a public road and sidewalk to be constructed. In this scenario, the new Gilman Square would be framed by roads on three sides, but the eastern edge would be framed by a new building.





THE NEW GILMAN SQUARE

Public spaces are crucial to neighborhood identity, and they also can add value to nearby properties. This Station Area Plan is rooted in the idea that Gilman Square can be a center of pedestrian activity, presenting a welcoming environment for MBTA riders, neighborhood residents and the business community.

The creation of a central public gathering place is the foundation of this plan. Streets will be realigned to slow automobile traffic and connect residents from the neighborhoods around Marshall Street, Bradley Street, Walnut Street and Pearl Street to the Green Line station. Anchor buildings like the Knights of Malta, the Litchfield Block, Mad Oyster Studios, and Pearl Street Park senior housing will be preserved and celebrated.

Modestly-scaled infill buildings are envisioned for parcels facing the new square to increase jobs, services and housing opportunities for the neighborhood. Privately-owned parcels that are currently used as gas stations, automotive repair shops, and surface parking lots will be zoned for redevelopment that is consistent with the historic commercial buildings that formerly existed in Gilman Square. The traditional two- and three-family homes that surround the square will be protected with stronger, more predictable zoning regulations.

FILL IN THE GAPS

Redefining the Street Edge

Realignment of the main intersection and development of a central civic space for the neighborhood is the first step in place-making efforts called for by this plan. The second objective developed between neighborhood residents, the design team, and City Staff is to facilitate and encourage the redevelopment of underutilized sites in the core of Gilman Square.

One of the most important themes articulated during the public process was the need to reestablish the center of activity that once existed at the intersection of Medford, Pearl and Marshall Streets. Working closely with several property owners, the design team identified five potential sites where new construction could fill in the gaps between anchor buildings like Knights of Malta and Mad Oyster Studios.

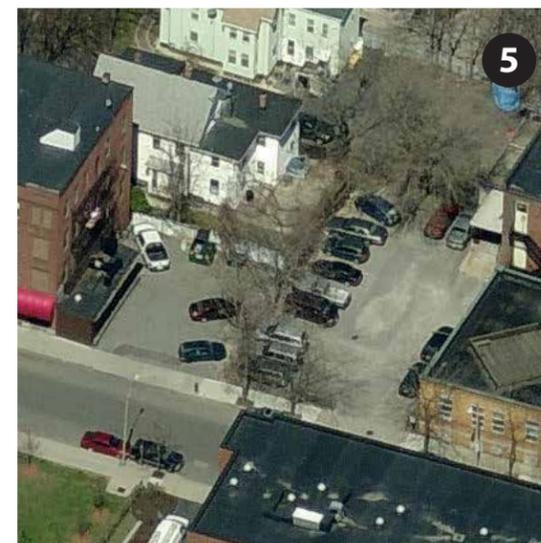
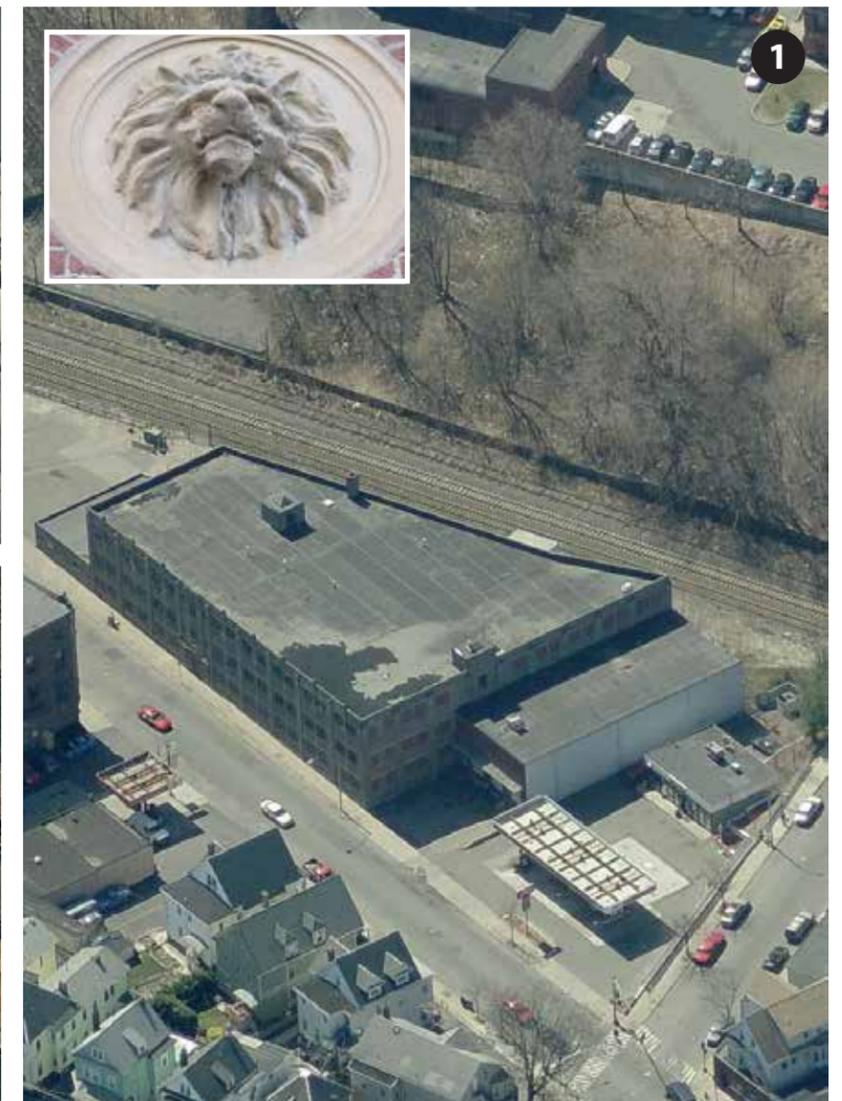
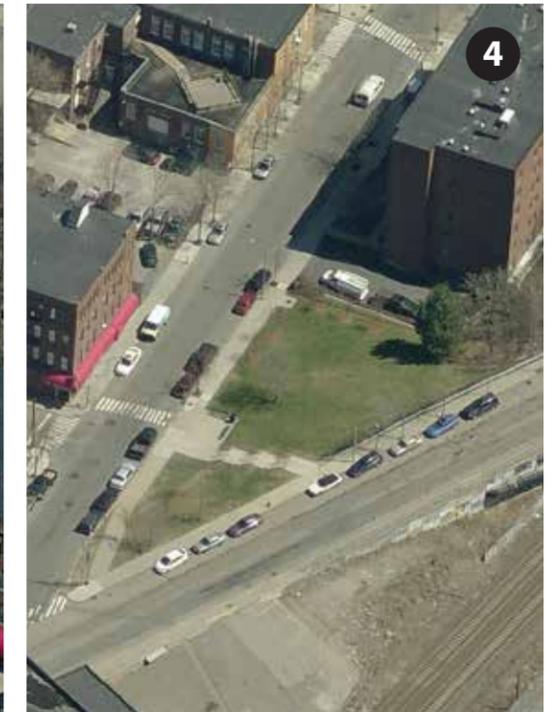
The five sites are identified on the map below include 1) the city-owned and long vacant Homans Buildings along with X-Tra Fuels gas station at 350-360 Medford, 2) Good Gas service station and auto repair at 345 Medford, 3) ABJ Auto Repair at 91 Marshall Street, 4) the steep sloped, and undefined green space known as Gilman Triangle, and 5) an area of land dedicated to parking that is split between the

Litchfield Block and Mad Oyster Studios. The map below illustrates how these sites frame the new 'Gilman Square' if it is developed according to this plan and illustrate how these two first objectives work together the Neighborhood Square that once was. Detailed exploration of the redevelopment potential for each of these sites is explored on pages 34-39.

Filling in these gaps in street frontage can be facilitated by using City land holdings, which include the Gilman Triangle and Homans Building sites, to incentivize development either through the outright sale of the property, public-private partnership, and even use of the Redevelopment Authorities urban renewal powers if needed (an urban renewal plan is already needed to conduct the land swap called for previously).

Based on public feedback at the October 17th visioning session, the design team sketched conceptual illustrations of potential infill for each of the five opportunity sites that were identified. During this process, a wide variety of ideas were brainstormed including an version of a new public space at the intersection of Marshall and Pearl, based on historic photos from the early 1900's. As identified on page 28, the major design challenge presented by the water infrastructure under

OPPORTUNITY SITES





Jeff Speck and David Carrico brainstorm initial design concepts for Gilman Square

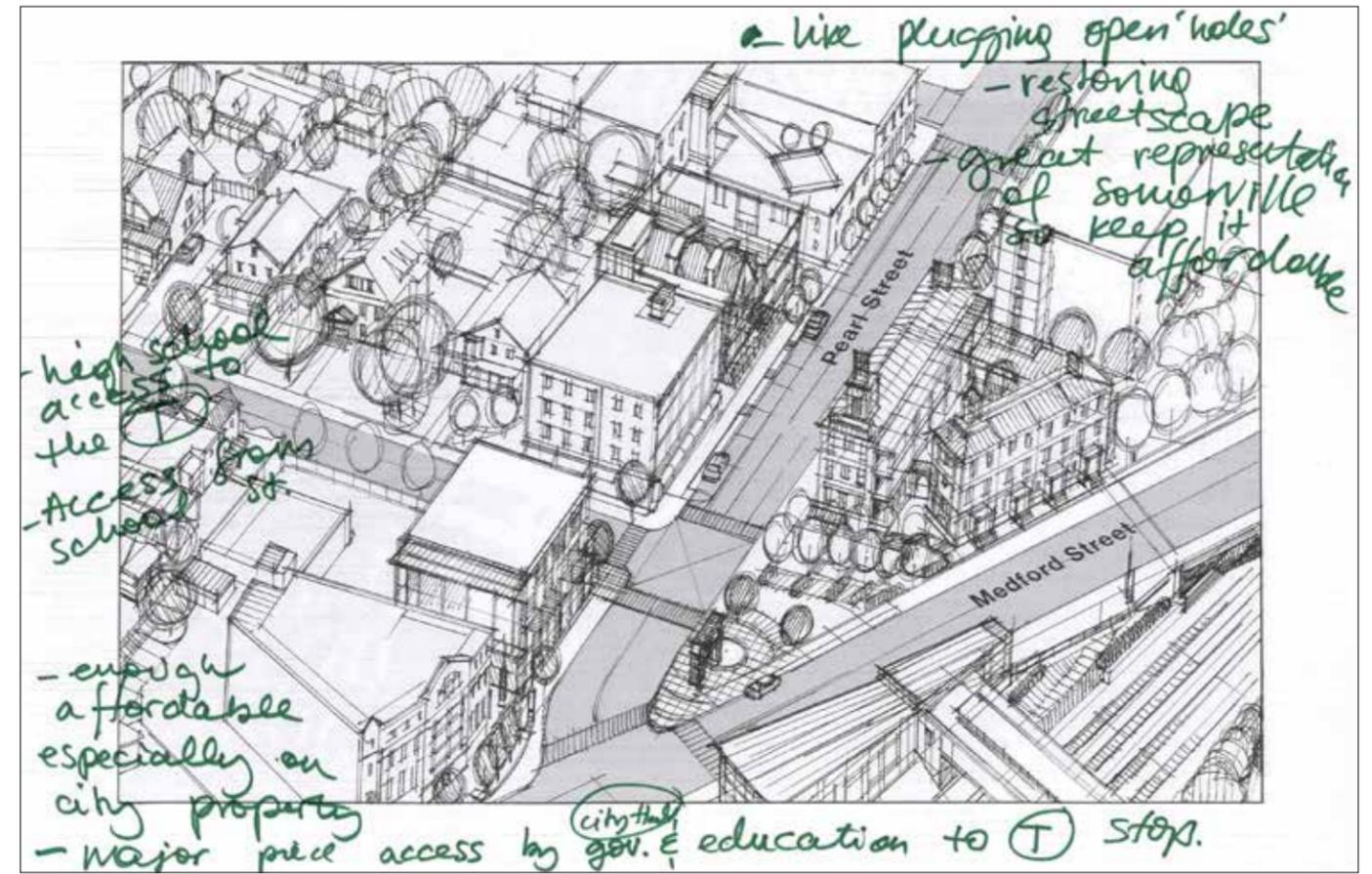
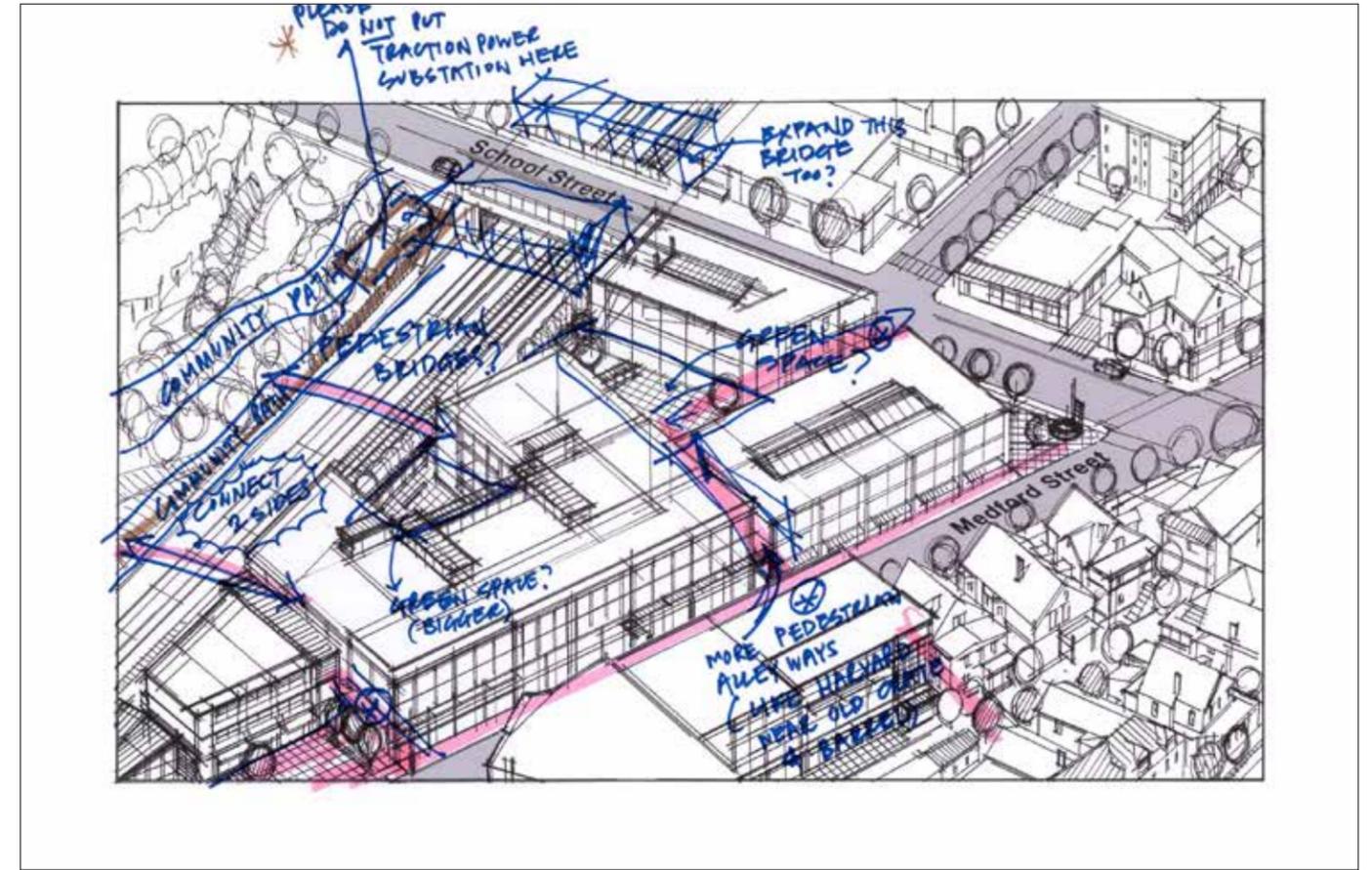
the intersection and a portion of 91 Marshall St. actually lead to revised concepts for the intersection that improved the quality of the public space at its center. At the same time, re-configuration of the intersection increased the probability of ABJ Autobody as a potential redevelopment infill site.

Honoring public feedback from the Visioning Session, designers explored concepts for modestly-scaled, traditionally-designed redevelopment of surface parking lots and other under utilized properties while preserving key historic commercial buildings that were still in good condition. Residents were then asked to critique all of the conceptual sketches at a subsequent Design Charrette so that another round of public feedback could be incorporated into final design concepts.

Following discussions between the City and the private property owner of X-Tra Fuels at 360 Medford St., site one was selected for a detailed redevelopment study, which is presented on page 36. Although the second site, 345 Medford Street, could facilitate a basic four-story infill building of roughly 20,000 square feet, more detailed studies were not conducted because near-term change is not expected on this site. Similar to site one, conceptual architectural renderings and floor plans were also developed for ABJ Auto Repair, the third site, because it is such an important piece of the redevelopment concept for Gilman Square for reshaped site (see page 42). Site four is another important site that is crucial for properly framing the new space so that it is perceived as a public, outdoor room.

The slope running from Medford to Pearl presents a challenge for the site, but it can be solved internal to the building and may provide solutions for an attached public square should the engineering of the detached square called for in this plan prove too difficult to engineer due to topography. Recalling historic photos of the area, residents envisioned filling the final gap along Pearl Street between Mad Oyster Studios and the Knights of Malta building, but since the parking lot is actively used by two distinct property owners with numerous tenants, any redevelopment of the site would be far of in the future.

Of additional note, City staff made special consideration of the Homans Building as a redevelopment site. Additions need to be removed from the rear of the building to provide space in the rail right-of-way for both the Green Line and Commuter Rail tracks and on the side to accommodate a small shared-space plaza that will permit The Ride to drop off handicapped transit riders. Structural damage has already impacted much of the building and the demolition of these additions will leave the front facade as the only portion fully intact. With respect to the Homans contribution as part of Gilman Square's history, a preservation mason should be hired to determine the potential extraction, preservation, and reuse of the distinct front door surround. Additionally, if any features of the door surround are able to be preserved, they should be relocated to an appropriate site in Gilman Square - such as the new civic space.



Xtra-Fuels and the Homans Building

Infill Opportunity Site #1: Gilman Square's Western Gateway

Site 1 is Gilman Square's western gateway. It consists of two properties: the 48,000 square foot City-owned warehouse lot, and the 13,000 square foot privately-owned gas station and convenience store.

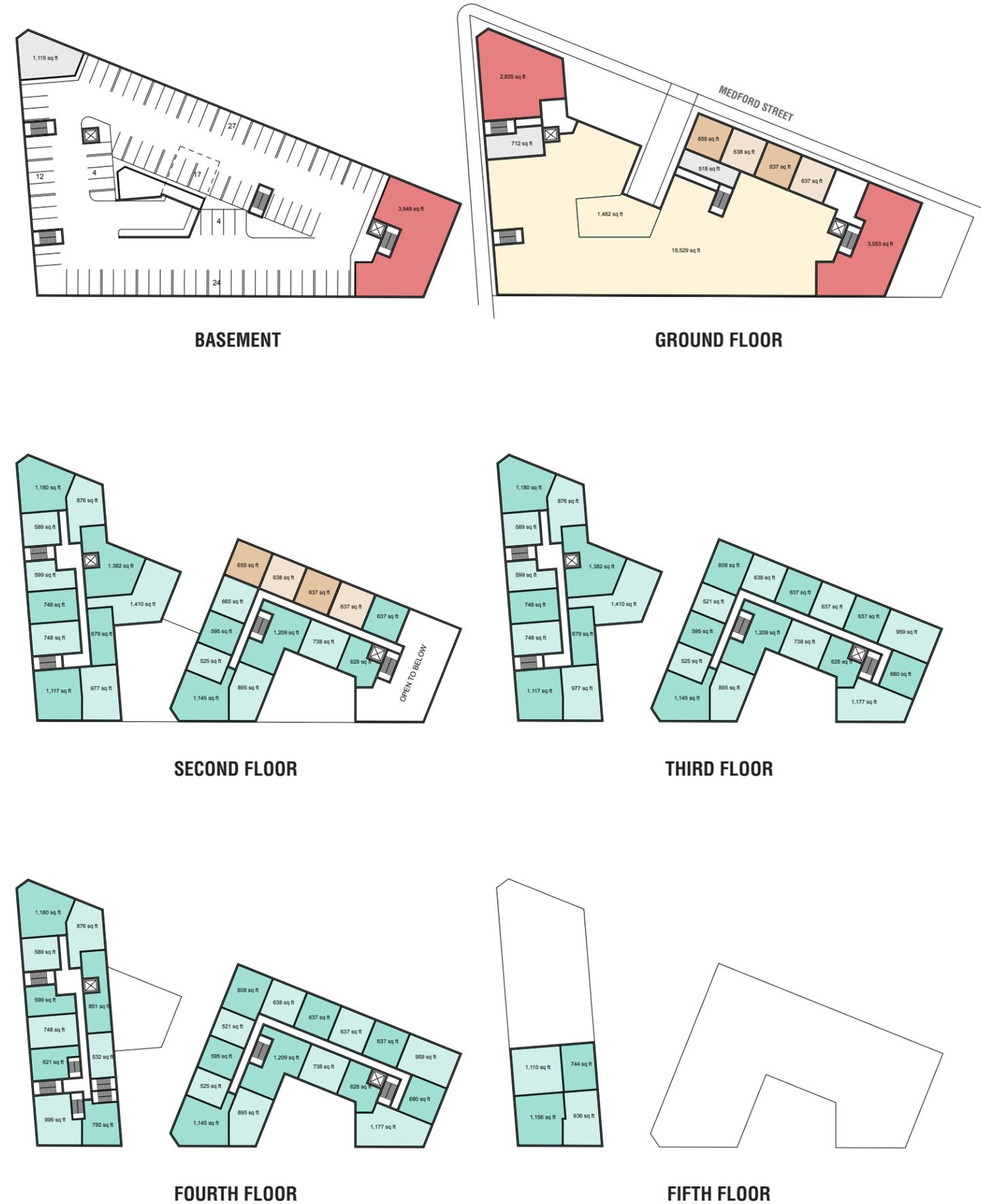
The development scenario for Site 1 was chosen to function as either two separate projects or one coordinated project. It envisions one or two buildings that hug the sidewalk of Medford Street and School Street, to preserve and expand the urban feel of the Homans Building facade. High-value corners of the site are envisioned as retail, restaurant or gallery space open to the public. Most of the ground floor is planned as craft manufacturing space, with heavy walls to mitigate the presence of the adjacent commuter rail tracks.

Building heights range from three to five stories. The total development represents roughly 124,000 square feet of built space, including:

- 6,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space
- 78 apartment units of various sizes
- Four townhouse-style live-work units
- 18,000 square feet of craft manufacturing space
- 90 garage parking spaces

This development scenario is conceptual in nature, but it was carefully created to honor the public consensus reached during the Somerville by Design Station Area Planning Series. Building heights are modest. Architecture and design are traditional, rather than modern.

Facades are placed against the sidewalk to improve walkability. Ground floor retail and café spaces are included. Arts space, including creative-economy commercial space as well as live-work space is emphasized. Family-sized housing and affordable housing is integrated into the design.



ABJ Auto Repair

Infill Opportunity Site #2: Framing the New Gilman Square

Site 2 is Gilman Square's eastern gateway, welcoming visitors arriving on the Green Line or from Medford Street. It consists of the 13,000 square foot privately-owned automobile repair lot. Because of the roadway and utility issues discussed in detail on page 28, the development concept gives up roughly 1,200 square feet of privately-owned land and gains roughly 800 square feet of public roadway.

The development scenario for Site 2 was chosen to create an urban corner opposite the Green Line station, to establish attractive views from Pearl Street and Medford Street, and to maximize value for the private property owner. A developable floorplate of roughly 9,000 square feet is created, with a shape that is roughly triangular. A façade roughly 100 feet long faces the new public square, which will provide high-value ground floor retail or restaurant space. This façade is built up to the sidewalk, which becomes wider as it approaches Medford Street, reaching a maximum width of roughly 25 feet.

Consistent with public opinion, the architecture is traditional.

The building height is four stories. The total development represents roughly 36,000 square feet of built space, including:

- 7,800 square feet of ground floor commercial space
- 24 apartment units of various sizes
- 25 garage parking spaces

This development scenario requires extensive coordination and cooperation between the private property owner and the City of Somerville. To achieve the community vision established in the Somerville by Design Station Area Planning Series, a land swap is needed, with the private owner gaining land that is currently part of the huge intersection at Medford and Pearl and giving up land at the corner of Pearl and Marshall.



PROMOTE STREET LIFE

Creating Spaces for Socializing, Recreating, and Doing Business

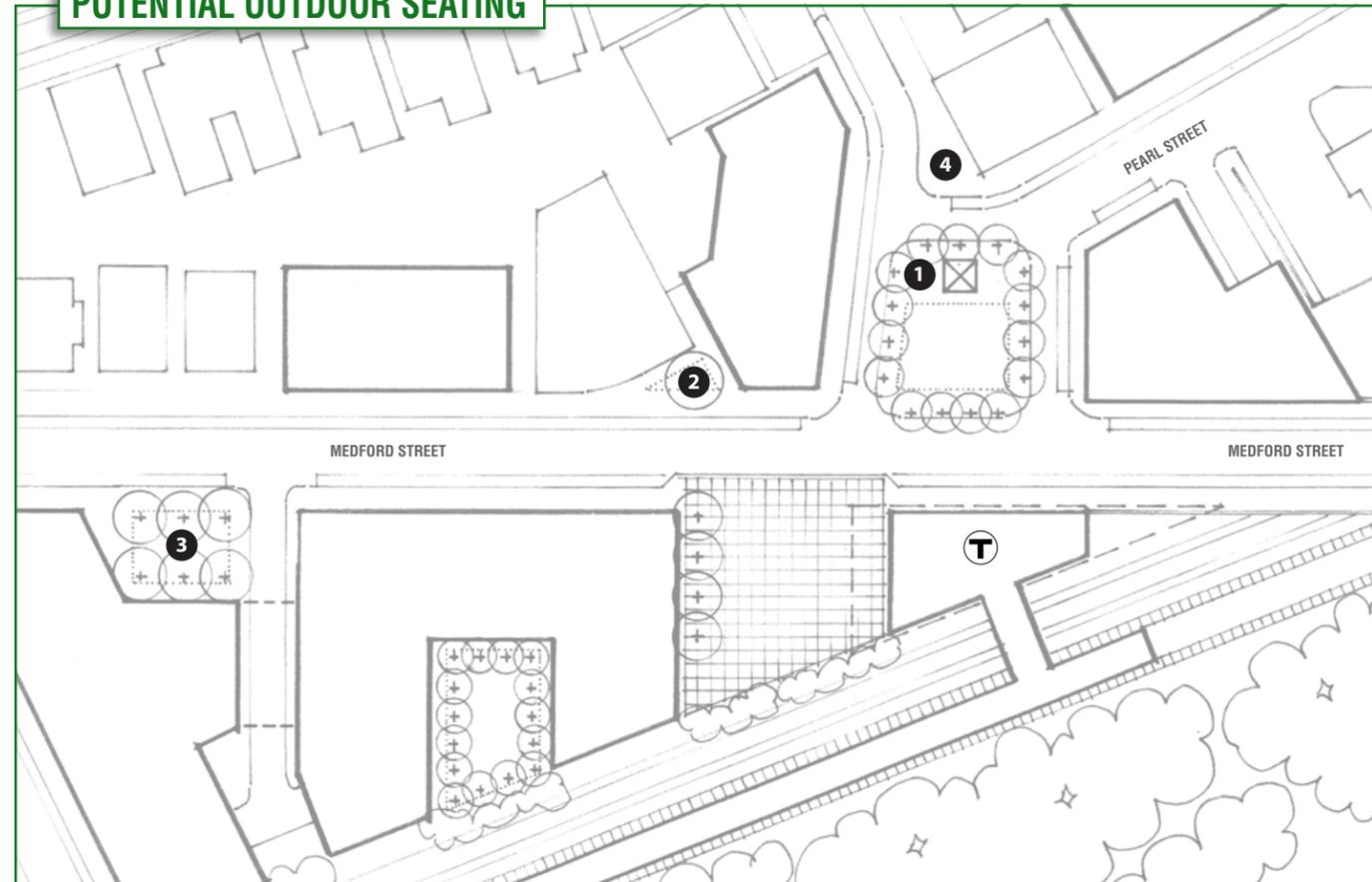
The redesign of Gilman Square's main intersection calls for the City to invest in the development of a public square to serve as the social and economic heart of the neighborhood (see #1 on "Potential for Outdoor Seating" below). This new 'Gilman Square' will provide a central social space for the public, an accessible path for pedestrians to the Transit Station, and a landmark that will help reinforce neighborhood identity. Construction of a new public square will also contribute toward achieving SomerVison's overall goal of developing 125 acres of new civic and recreation space citywide. However, because Somerville's urban fabric is densely woven, with relatively few parks and open spaces compared to the size of the population, achieving this open space goal will also require a creative, entrepreneurial approach from private property owners to design and build privately-owned, publicly-accessible spaces like retail plazas, street seating, and outdoor cafes.

The next page illustrates some of the many possibilities for incorporating additional outdoor spaces into sidewalk extensions and infill and redevelopment sites surrounding the new square. If the Marshall-Pearl-Medford intersection and Gilman Square are redeveloped according to this plan,

the ABJ Auto Repair site would be slightly reshaped, creating the opportunity for a small protected plaza on the north side of Medford, framed by the Knights of Malta building and a new four-story, mixed-use building on site (see #2 below). Redevelopment of the X-Tra Fuels / Homans Building site could include a roughly 2,000 square foot commercial plaza or pocket park (see #3 below) internal to the lot. Finally, reorganization of the intersection creates an opportunity to bump-out the sidewalk in front of the Litchfield Block building, site of the new Oleana restaurant, that is appropriate for outdoor seating open to the public or as a dining patio for patrons (#4 below).

The first two objectives of this plan give residents of Gilman Square a destination to go to, while creating places for them to sit outdoors provides a place to stay once they get there. Yet, to fully invigorate the street life residents are looking for, other initiatives such as the City's Storefront Improvement Program and investments in creating a connected tree canopy along neighborhood streets will be important in fostering a public realm that achieves our community goals of healthy living, economic vitality, traffic calming, and cultural activity.

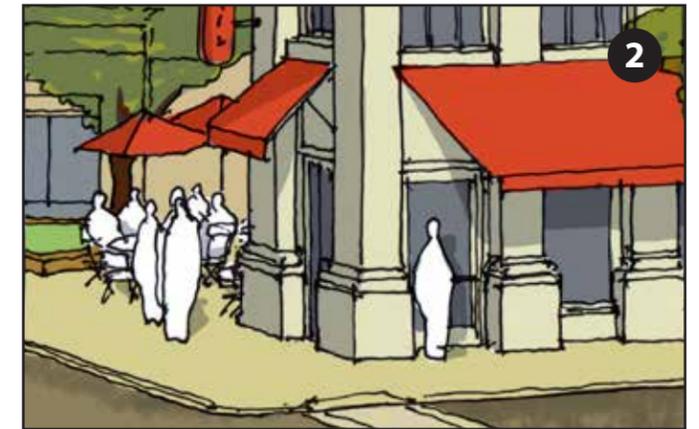
POTENTIAL OUTDOOR SEATING



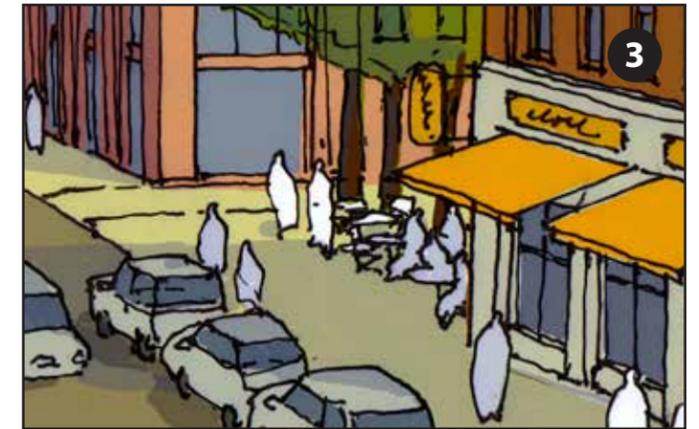
The new Gilman Square is a return to Somerville's roots. It will provide a gathering space for the public, an accessible path for pedestrians to the Transit Station, and landmark that will help contribute toward neighborhood identity. The tower has been designed with enough space to realistically contain a small coffee or newspaper stand serving Green Line commuters.



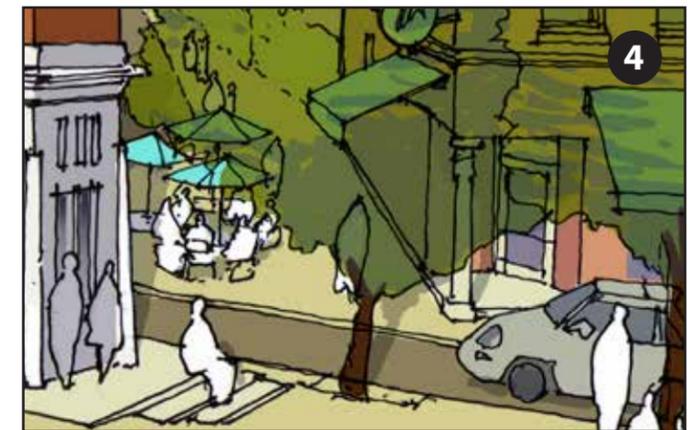
The southern end of the building that is envisioned for the ABJ Auto site will be one of the most valuable commercial spaces in Gilman Square. Generous sidewalks, particularly on the western side adjacent to the historic Knights of Malta building create excellent opportunities for window-shopping, or for outdoor dining, all in clear view of the Green Line station and the Somerville Community Path.



The recessed plaza between the X-Tra Fuels site and the Homans Building site is large enough to feel like an urban park. It is designed to feature enough land area to support large canopy trees that can offer shade for café tables and other seating, adding value to adjacent commercial and residential space.



The restaurant space formerly known as the Paddock is currently being renovated by a well-known chef, and is expected to open for business in fall of 2013. With a focus on reinvestment in and support for existing assets, the plan to create a real 'Gilman Square' calls for a sidewalk bump-out on Marshall Street to allow for outdoor seating for this new restaurant, while simultaneously slowing traffic and increasing pedestrian safety.



COMPLETE THE STREETS

Safety, Comfort, and Convenience for All Users

Somerville residents love the City's walkable neighborhoods. Our small blocks and narrow streets create an excellent grid for pedestrians, and roughly 95% of Somerville homes are within a five-minute walk of a neighborhood square or other business use.

City streets and sidewalks are public assets, and must be safe and accessible to all users. Our core values as a community as well as long-standing legal requirements compel the City to maintain our infrastructure at the highest level possible. The scale of this management effort is huge: the City is responsible for 93 miles of roadway, 6.5 million square feet of sidewalk area, and 3,200 curb ramps. In the Gilman Square area, there are six miles of roadway, 400,000 square feet of sidewalk, and 166 curb ramps to be maintained.

For decades, Somerville's approach to managing these public assets could be described as a "band-aid" approach. The City typically put off maintenance and repairs until a street or sidewalk became extremely deteriorated. Repairs were often performed in isolation from other projects. Community goals such as ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities, or promoting the health of our street trees were not emphasized in typical road reconstruction projects. All the while, opportunities for cost savings and efficient spending were missed: studies have shown that every \$1 invested in preventative maintenance for pavement can save government agencies between \$6 and \$14 in major reconstruction costs.

Fortunately, the City of Somerville has committed to a more strategic, data-driven approach to asset management. In 2012, the City conducted a rigorous survey of existing conditions to help prioritize repairs for every crosswalk, curb ramp, and sidewalk in Somerville. In early 2013, the Somerville by Design "Complete Street Series" gave residents the opportunity to shape the City's approach to street design by collaborating with city planners on a design manual and new City ordinance. Also in 2013, the City launched the "Neighborhood Street Reconstruction Program", which emphasizes cost savings using preventative maintenance. Additionally, the City published its first Self-Evaluation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, which expands the physical inventory of public assets to include an assessment of City buildings, as well as policies, procedures and programs regarding accessibility.

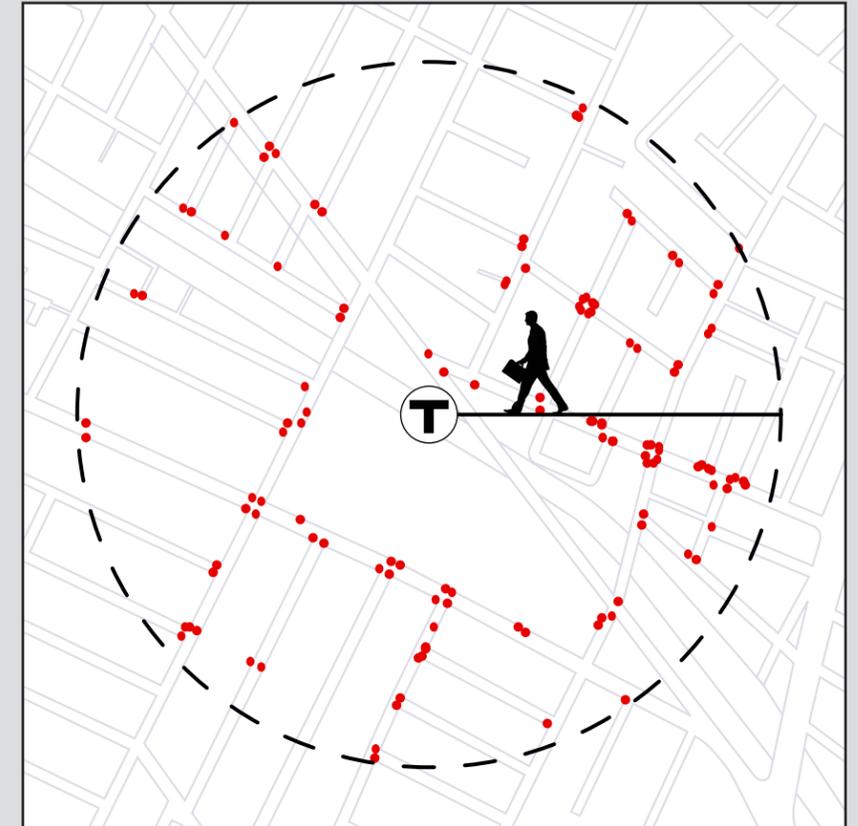
A final piece of the puzzle is to make sure that people using Somerville's streets and sidewalks know where they are, and how to get where they are going. Participants in the Station Area Planning Series discussed the need for wayfinding signage to guide residents to Gilman Square, and to guide visitors arriving on the Green Line to all of Somerville's great destinations. All of these initiatives represent an integrated, proactive approach to evaluating projects based on need, cost effectiveness, and a broader and more nuanced understanding of the ways that public infrastructure can serve the public interest.



CURB RAMP REPAIRS

When a sidewalk meets a street intersection, the slope is called a curb ramp. Somerville has more than 3200 curb ramps Citywide.

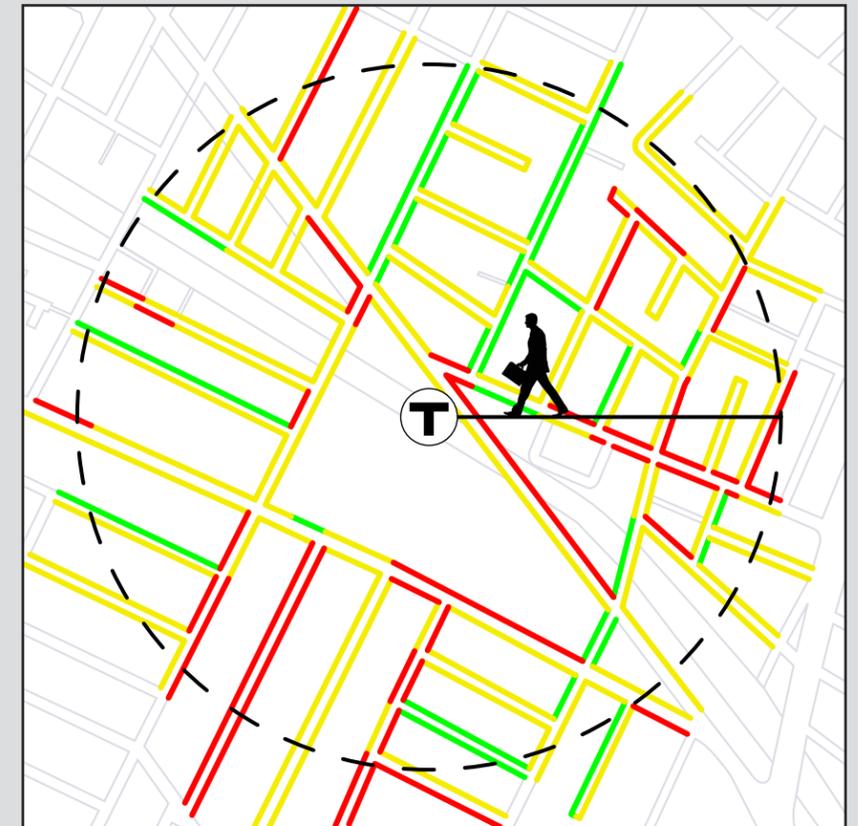
Since many of these ramps were installed before the Americans with Disabilities Act, there are hundreds of places where pedestrian safety and comfort is compromised by steep slopes, cracked surfaces, or poor drainage. The City just completed a major inventory of curb ramps that will help speed up the process to improve inaccessible ramps. In Gilman Square, major problem intersections include Pearl Street at Walnut Street; Highland Avenue at School Street, and Medford Street at Thurston Street.



SIDEWALK REPAIRS

Many of Gilman Square's sidewalks were built more than fifty years ago. Common problems include narrow sidewalk widths, tree roots buckling the concrete, and slopes that exceed the design standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The City of Somerville recently launched a repair prioritization study that will be used to guide capital investments all around the City. In Gilman Square, high-priority sidewalk repairs include Thurston Street between Medford and Evergreen, the intersection of School Street and Medford Street, and most of Pearl Street. Some repairs, like the sidewalks along the Medford Street bridge, will be completed during construction of the Green Line.



INVEST IN CIVIC SPACES

Parks, Playgrounds, and Plazas

Somerville has very little open space, even by urban standards. For every thousand Somerville residents, we have roughly 2.4 acres of public open space. In Gilman Square, the ratio is 2.2 acres per thousand residents. This Station Area Plan calls for a major new civic space to be constructed in the heart of Gilman Square, but it is also important to plan for the neighborhood's open spaces as a larger system. Each civic space asset can serve multiple purposes: recreation, storm water absorption, air quality improvement, community building. Each may have different needs, ranging from normal maintenance, to low-cost upgrades, to major redesign and reconstruction. By treating these facilities as parts of an integrated system, the City can better meet the needs of the neighborhood and the City as a whole.

The core area of the Gilman Square neighborhood has a variety of public open spaces including Marshall Street Playground, Otis Street Playground, the Winter Hill Community School yard and the recently-built, award-winning Ed Leathers Park. Slightly removed, but equally valuable is Central Hill Park and Playground. This historic park, which was last updated in 2008, stretches along Highland Avenue from School Street to Walnut Street and includes a children's play area, public art, a veterans' memorial, and an open green lawn with fifty-year-old shade trees.

This plan recommends Marshall Street Playground and Otis Street Playground as candidates for low-cost, easy-to-plan upgrades. These civic spaces have good bones, and minor updates and improvements can go a long way to make sure they add value and serve neighborhood residents. Improved

signage, fresh paint, better plantings, and collaborative programming with neighborhood organizations and the City's Recreation Department are improvement strategies that can be implemented without years of planning and huge sums of money. The Hill Community School Yard has also been identified as a priority for improvement. The City should include these civic spaces in the next update of its state-mandated Open Space and Recreation Plan, which is required to qualify for certain funding sources. These facilities should also be identified in the City's Capital Improvement Program.

Ed Leathers Park serves as a success story for recent public investment in the neighborhood. The City of Somerville purchased the land in 2003, and spent the next six years cleaning contaminated soil. During that time, the City collaborated with neighborhood residents to design the park as a place for relaxation and unstructured recreation. The park opening in 2009 drew hundreds of residents, and the City is currently working to purchase additional land and expand the park.

Finally, the Green Line Extension presents an opportunity to improve the civic space system in Gilman Square. The MBTA will be constructing a public plaza at the lower entrance to the station. The City should partner with the MBTA to ensure that this space is designed and managed as a high-quality civic space. Additionally, the MBTA is currently committed to building the Gilman Square segment at the same time as the station is constructed. The City should continue advocating for the entire Somerville Community Path to be built as part of the Green Line project.

MARSHALL STREET PLAYGROUND

Marshall Street Playground is located roughly halfway between Pearl Street and Broadway, serving Gilman Square residents as well as families from Winter Hill. It covers roughly 0.24 acres of land area, and is designed primarily as a children's play space, with benches, picnic tables and numerous shade trees creating a pleasant sitting environment for adults.



OTIS STREET PLAYGROUND

This playground at the corner of Otis Street and Dana Street is one of Somerville's smallest at just 0.1 acres. The space is dominated by McGrath Highway and a pedestrian bridge connecting Gilman Square to East Somerville. Although every public space is valuable, Otis is often underutilized as a playground for children and should be identified in the 2015 update of the City's Open Space Plan for improvements and possibly redesigned as a different type of space.



WINTER HILL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Winter Hill Community School yard, at the corner of Evergreen Avenue, Sycamore Street and Thurston Street is a one acre schoolyard completely covered in asphalt. There are no plantings, and very little seating space. Despite the unforgiving blacktop, the schoolyard is well-used, with more than 400 students taking morning and afternoon recess. Upgrading this facility is a large undertaking, but phasing strategies can be explored to save time and money.



Grand Opening of the new Ed Leathers Community Park (2008)

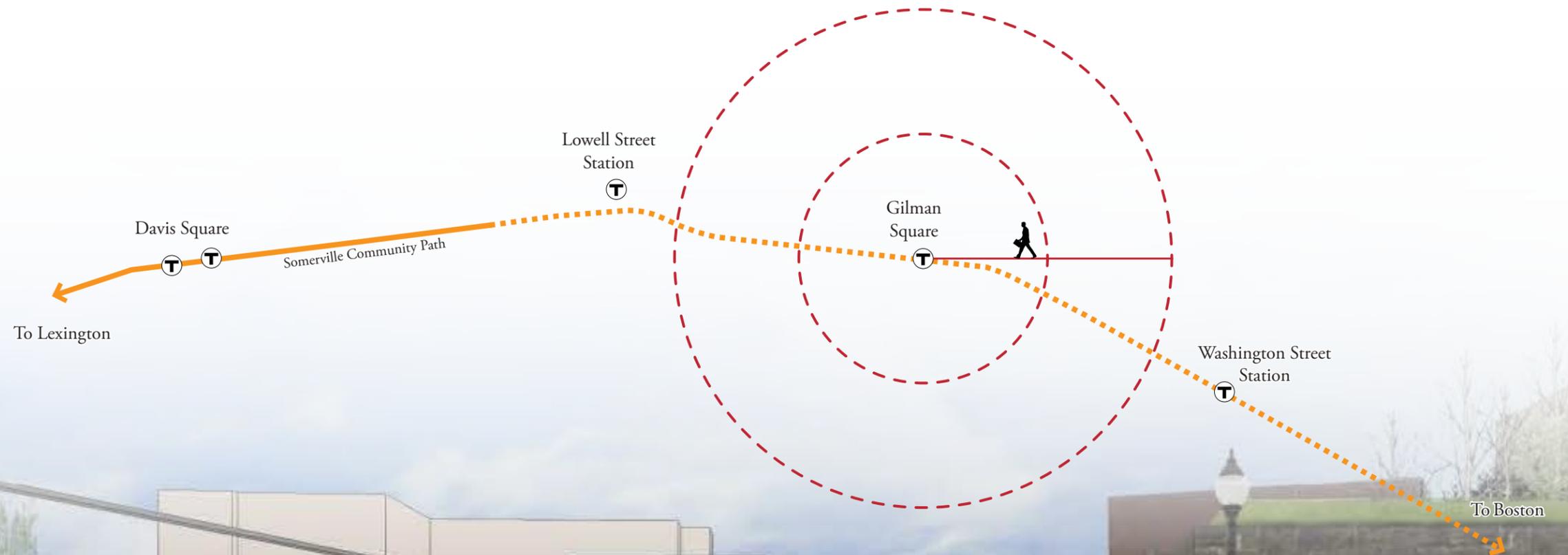
COMMUNITY PATH EXTENSION

The Somerville Community Path is one of our City's most cherished public assets. This one-mile linear park serves as a commuting route and recreational facility for thousands of Somerville residents and visitors. The path currently runs from Cedar Street westward through Davis Square to the Cambridge city line, where it connects with the 14-mile Minuteman Commuter Bikeway, which serves thousands of daily bicycle commuters from Boston's western suburbs and thousands more recreational cyclists.

The Community Path is currently being extended through Somerville to downtown Boston, and it will soon serve the Gilman Square neighborhood. In May 2013, construction began on the 0.25 mile path segment connecting Cedar Street eastward to Lowell Street. This segment is scheduled for opening to the public in 2014.

The MBTA Green Line Extension project is preparing full design and engineering services for the remaining three miles of the Community Path Extension. The path will run alongside the Green Line trolley tracks from Lowell Street to Gilman Square, Washington Street, and Lechmere stations. When it is completed, it will fill the missing link in one of the most heavily-used regional bicycle networks in the United States.

The path segment in Gilman Square will be one of the most attractive and interesting segments of the entire extension. An at-grade crossing will be created at the southern (uphill) end of the School Street bridge. From there, the path will run across the hillside to connect with the Medford Street bridge. The path will be elevated from the train tracks, with memorable views into Gilman Square and uphill towards Somerville City Hall and Somerville High School. A large seating area, including bicycle storage and an access to the Green Line station will be created. Best of all, this path segment will be built at the same time as the Green Line itself, meaning that this remarkable open space resource will serve Gilman Square in spring 2018.



PROMOTE ATTAINABLE HOUSING

Provide Choices in the Marketplace

Like many urban communities across the country, Somerville has experienced significant increases in housing prices over the last decade. Citywide, Somerville has roughly 3,200 housing units that are permanently reserved as affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents. This number represents 10% of the City's overall housing stock. In the Gilman Square neighborhood, there are 325 affordable units (15% of the overall stock).

Participants in the Station Area Planning Series called for continued focus on housing in Gilman Square. Public policy is used to create affordable housing in three ways. The first policy approach is to provide financial incentives to residential property owners in return for temporary affordable housing. Landlords can qualify for grants and loans to perform rehabilitation, lead hazard abatement, or energy efficiency improvements if they agree to rent their units to low- and moderate-income tenants. These incentive programs are particularly important in keeping residential units near transit at affordable rental rates and should be expanded. The City should consider prioritizing funding for projects within 1/4 mile of rapid transit stations.

A second approach is to construct new buildings with permanently affordable units. Developments of this sort often use public subsidies, publicly-owned land, tax credits or loans

from nonprofit entities. Units can also be designed to serve specific types of residents, including senior citizens, persons with disabilities, families with children, and even artists. This Station Area Plan recommends that at least one City-owned property in the core of Gilman Square be designed, funded and constructed as purpose-built affordable housing.

The third policy tool is Somerville's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. Developers of market-rate housing are required to set-aside a percentage of the units they build for low- and moderate-income residents or pay into a affordable housing trust fund. This policy has produced roughly 100 affordable units since its adoption in 1990. Today, the inclusionary requirements are applied to development projects of eight or more units, requiring that 12.5% of the units be designated as affordable. This plan recommends that for properties in the core of Gilman Square, the inclusionary requirement be revised to 15%.

In Gilman Square, affordability restrictions on two large buildings will expire during the next ten years. This Station Area Plan recommends preservation of the existing affordable housing in Gilman Square. The City of Somerville and its partners should lead negotiations with private property owners to extend the long-standing contracts for senior housing at Pearl Street Park and Faulkner Tower.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

The City of Somerville offers small grants and loans to property owners and first-time homebuyers in return for temporary affordable housing. Lead abatement, housing rehabilitation, and energy efficiency assistance programs are an important part of the City's policy approach to housing affordability. Since 2000, roughly \$2.5 million in City assistance has been loaned and granted in Gilman Square.



INCLUSIONARY HOUSING

As the Green Line Extension brings rapid-transit to areas of the city outside of the existing TOD districts, it is recommended that the Somerville Zoning Ordinance be amended to require that all new construction and rehabilitation projects of significant size located within 1/4 mile of any operational rapid-transit station provide at least 15% of units as affordable housing.



PURPOSE BUILT HOUSING

In 2002, a non-profit purchased 301 Medford St. from the City to build an affordable housing project. The resulting six-plex of three, two-bedroom and three, three-bedroom units is considered an excellent example of contextually appropriate design. With this example in mind, this plan recommends that the City partner with a developer to design, finance, and construct purpose-built affordable housing on at least one City-owned site within the core of Gilman Square.



ADOPT SMART PARKING POLICY

A Systems Approach to Parking Demand Management

Although most of Gilman Square was built long before automobiles were common, we live in a different world today. Both residential quality-of-life and business vitality require a certain amount of vehicular parking. However, too much parking can be bad for urban neighborhoods. Participants in the Station Area Planning Series (as well as the MBTA's Green Line design meetings) have called for prioritization of walking and biking over automobile use in planning the Gilman Square station area. To accomplish this goal, parking policy will require a 'systems approach' to develop a variety of tools to address parking issues from multiple angles.

For the 2,100 housing units located within ¼ mile of the Gilman Square station there are roughly 2,500 parking spaces, including driveways, off-street parking areas, and street frontage for on-street parking. This represents an *estimated* supply of approximately 1.2 parking spaces per unit while vehicle registration data indicates an ownership rate of 1.3 vehicles/unit. On the ground, Gilman Square seems to be operating at the sweet spot yet the Somerville Zoning Ordinance currently requires new development to provide at least 1.5 *off-street* parking spaces for every new unit. This is an obvious disconnect because the zoning requires all parking to be off-street, and be provided at a higher rate than what is demonstrated by actual ownership. To correct this, it is recommended that parking requirements be adjusted to 1.0 spaces/unit and that one on-street space per twenty feet of unobstructed street frontage be permitted to count toward

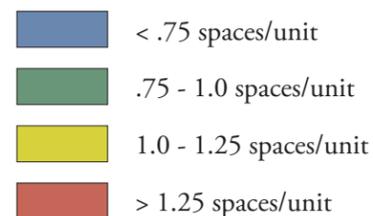
meeting parking requirements. This, of course, has not taken the arrival of the Green Line into consideration. Once the Green Line is operational, properties within ¼ mile of the station should be subject to a reduction in required parking of 0.5 space/unit.

Gilman Square also need a series of tools to address parking for commercial businesses. Participants in the planning of Gilman Square were enthusiastic to "fill in the gaps" (see page 32), on properties that once featured great mixed-use, multi-story buildings but many of which are now parking lots or automobile oriented uses. Unfortunately, parking requirements for commercial space, in general, make it difficult to meet requirements because the sites at hand are small and have limited ability to absorb parking as currently required. To facilitate the vision of a revitalized and transit-oriented Gilman Square, parking requirements should be eliminated for neighborhood oriented businesses within ¼ mile of the station. To directly support parking for business activity, but protect against Green Line park-and-ride commuting behavior, metered parking spaces should be established in the core of Gilman Square along Medford, Pearl, and Marshall Streets.

Lastly, and as a key component of successfully meeting the 'filling in the gaps' and 'adopt smart parking policy' objectives of this plan, off-street parking for properties in the core of Gilman Square should be tuck-under or structured in form.

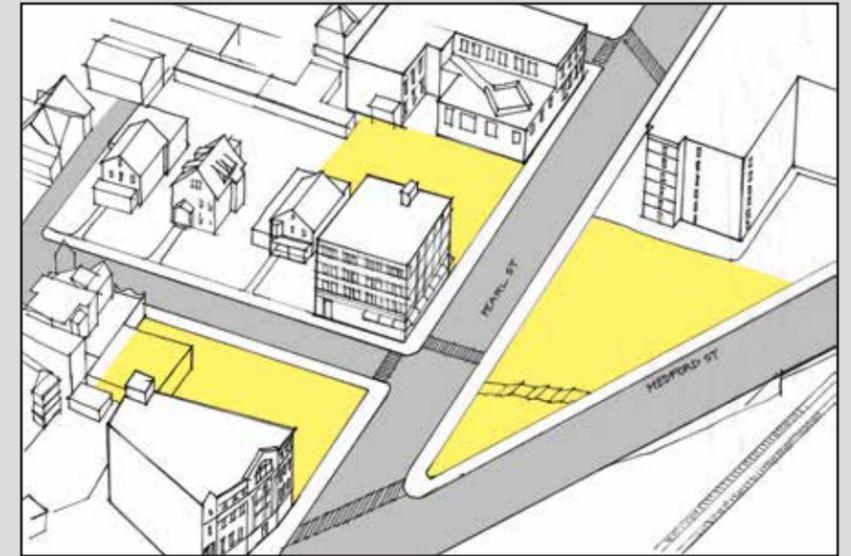
LAND DEDICATED TO PARKING

This map illustrates parking supply and demand around Gilman Square. For the 38 blocks within a five-minute walk of the Green Line station, parking availability is calculated at 1.2 parking spaces per housing unit. Blocks colored in red have ratios above that average, and in some cases have ratios greater than 2.0 spaces per unit. The lowest ratios (less than 0.75 spaces per unit) are calculated for three blocks south of Pearl Street, along Skilton Avenue and at the corner of Walnut Street.



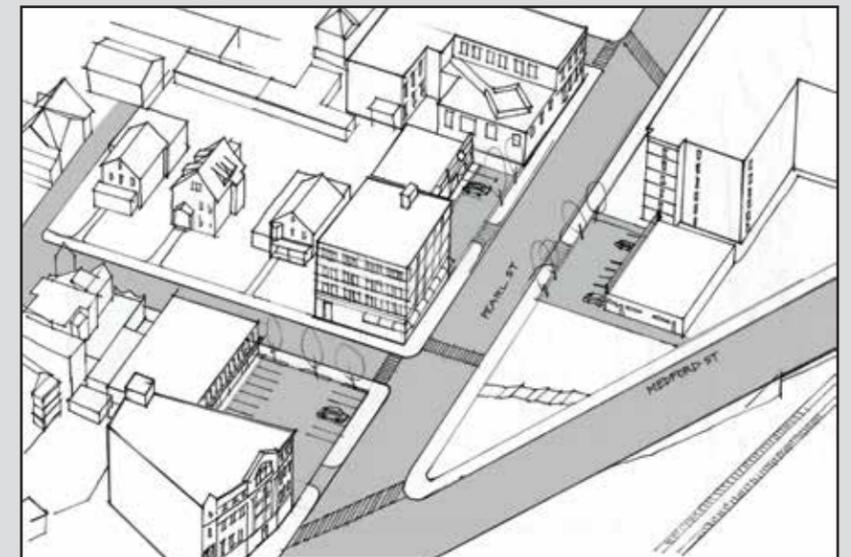
TEST SITES

Participants in the Station Area Planning Series suggested that three sites at the corner of Pearl and Marshall should be viewed as redevelopment opportunities. All three sites had multi-story buildings in the early 20th century placed right against the street.



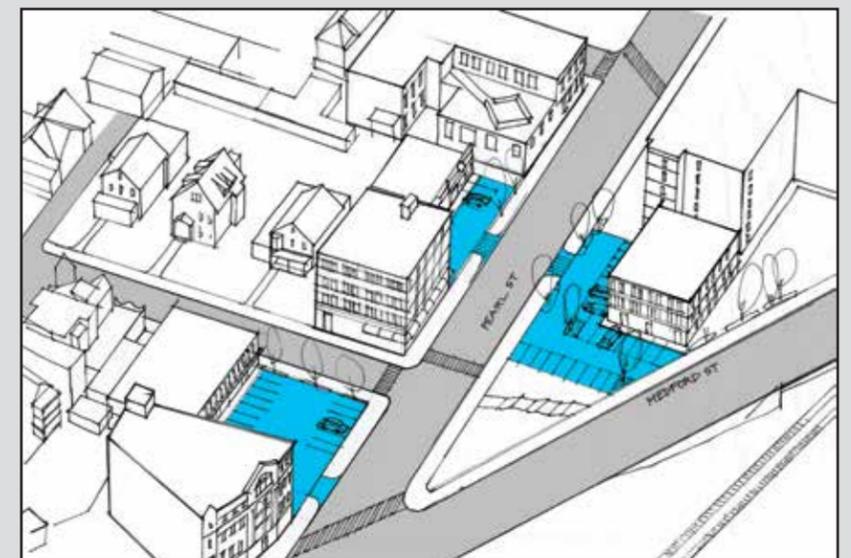
SCENARIO #1

If these sites were redeveloped under current zoning, we would probably see suburban strip-style buildings. Required setbacks and high parking ratios create incentives for low buildings set back from the street. These buildings would not be consistent with the historical pattern.



SCENARIO #2

Assume that a more urban two-story building is constructed on the former Citizens Building site. The Zoning Ordinance requires so much parking that there is no space left for landscaping or anything else. This scenario would be incompatible with the public vision produced during the Station Area Planning Series.



REFORM ZONING REGULATION

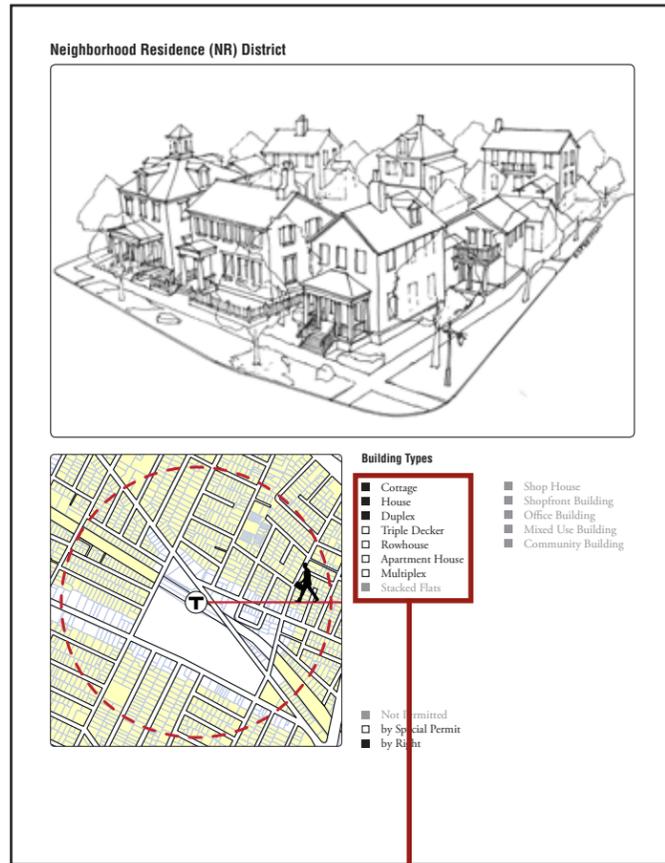
Zoning for Community Character

The SomerVision Comprehensive Plan calls on the City of Somerville to conserve its great residential blocks and enhance its funky squares and commercial corridors. In Gilman Square, residents and property owners took that big-picture vision down to the neighborhood scale, identifying a core area where rehabilitation and redevelopment would foster the return of Gilman Square as a node of neighborhood serving activity. Participants also identified the many residential blocks of multi-unit, detached houses that are deserving of protections from uncharacteristic infill brought on by the strong market for new housing.

Although these areas closely reflect how existing zoning districts are mapped over the neighborhood, the regulations of the existing districts unfortunately stand in the way of achieving many of the goals of this plan. Loopholes, contradicting cross-references, and “one size fits all” requirements can allow large projects on quiet residential streets while also making it almost impossible to build mixed-use buildings that are consistent with the vision for the future of Gilman Square.

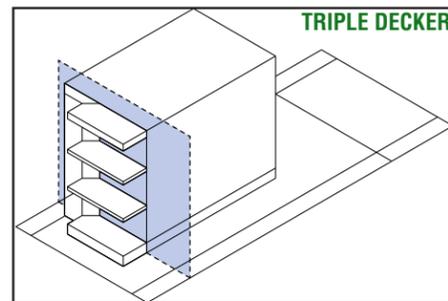
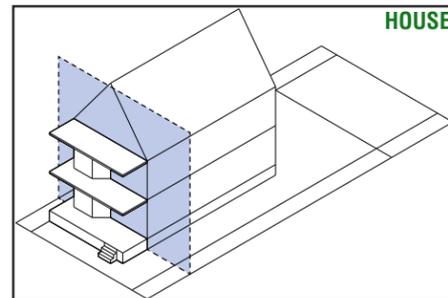
The Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development is currently undertaking a comprehensive update of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The goal is to develop a reformatted and updated version of the SZO that focuses on physical form of lots and structures and improves readability, organization, and graphic design. The Somerville by Design neighborhood planning process is the primary tool to inform needed changes in zoning regulation to implement SomerVision. Integrating the zoning revisions needed to properly redevelop Gilman Square as envisioned by neighborhood residents into the new zoning ordinance is one of the most important recommendations of this plan.

To foster the rebirth of Gilman Square as a transit-oriented node of activity, an entirely new ‘Neighborhood Square’ zoning district should be created that permits neighborhood-serving commercial uses, four-story mixed-use buildings, and parking regulations reflecting the recommendations from the Adopt Smart Parking Policy section covered previously. To foster the already existing community of ‘makers’ already operating in the square, the zoning should permit “fabrication” uses, including visual arts, performing arts, and small-scale manufacturing, and establish standards for live-work units for certified artists and fabricators. At the same time, a new “Neighborhood Residence” zoning district should be created to implement the recommendations of the City’s 2012 “Residence A / Residence B Technical Report” so that the existing character of nearby residential blocks is conserved and protected.

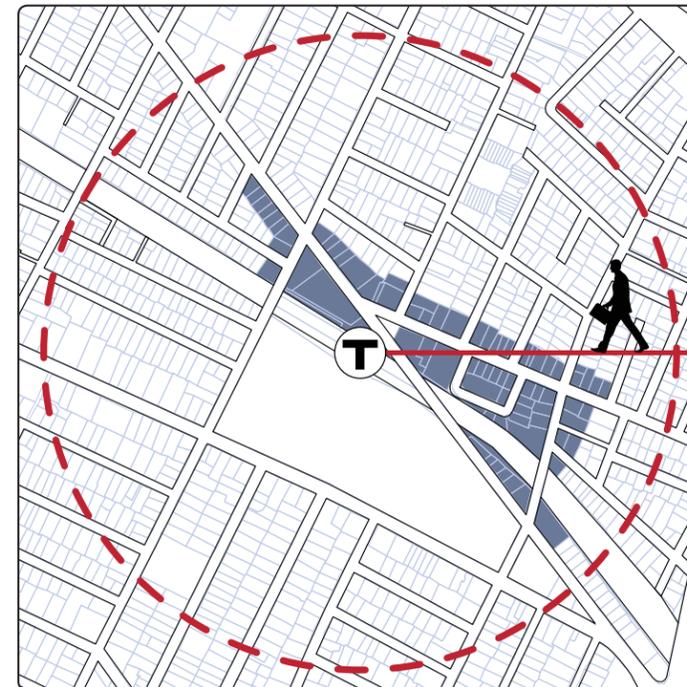


BUILDING TYPES

The new SZO will use ‘building types’ as the fundamental regulatory framework for the code. When dimensional standards become a factor of individual building typology, predictability is increased for alterations to existing structures and the form of new infill buildings. At the same time, flexibility is provided by permitting multiple buildings types as appropriate.



Neighborhood Square (NS) District



Building Types

- Cottage
 - House
 - Duplex
 - Triple Decker
 - Rowhouse
 - Apartment House
 - Multiplex
 - Stacked Flats
 - Shop House
 - Shopfront Building
 - Office Building
 - Mixed Use Building
 - Community Building
- Not Permitted
□ by Special Permit
■ by Right

SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Planning for a Vibrant Mix of Services, Spaces, and Jobs

In Somerville, we take pride in our business community. Our entrepreneurs provide needed goods and services to our residents, create job opportunities, and contribute to our City's fiscal health and funky multicultural environment. During the Station Area Planning Series, Gilman Square residents talked about the need to support existing business owners, attract new entrepreneurs to the neighborhood. Zoning reform is a key strategy to grow the local economy, but several other policy and programmatic initiatives can help support a vital and vibrant Gilman Square.

The City of Somerville should encourage businesses to locate in the core of the square that cater to residents' daily and weekly needs. To accomplish this goal, the City should continue and expand its technical assistance programs for entrepreneurs, which include business plan writing, financial literacy training, licensing and permitting guidance, marketing support, and tenant-landlord matching. In addition, the City should encourage business and property owners to participate in its federally-funded Storefront Improvement Program, which provides matching grants for qualified projects. To ensure maximum flexibility in funding potential projects in

Gilman Square, the City should pursue designation of the district as a federally-recognized "Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area".

A diverse business mix requires a diverse mix of commercial spaces and price points for rent. Older buildings can often rent commercial spaces at lower prices than new buildings. This plan recommends preservation of commercial space in Gilman Square's historic buildings such as the Knights of Malta building, the Litchfield Block, and the Mad Oyster Studios building to maintain a diverse mix of price points in the core of the square. New commercial space should be created as part of mixed-use redevelopment on the five opportunity sites identified on pages 32-33 of this plan.

This plan calls for the preservation and expansion of Gilman Square's creative economy. Businesses such as Boston Billiard Supply, East Cambridge Piano, Wooden Kiwi, SRP Signs (as well as the arts entrepreneurs in the Mad Oyster Studios building) should be celebrated and supported. The City should continue to support the arts and cultural community by disseminating information related to City-sponsored technical assistance, existing and proposed artists

spaces, open studios and other special events, and local support organizations and municipal programs.

The City and its nonprofit partners should work with business and property owners to make sure that appropriate space types and price points are maintained in the coming years. Buildings like the Knights of Malta building at 341-343 Medford Street are uniquely well-suited to production, fabrication and craft manufacturing businesses, which require high ceilings, freight elevators and loading docks. The City recently completed a study of space availability and lease rates, finding that studio and production space is in extremely high demand in Somerville. Targeted marketing and technical assistance will be needed to encourage property owners to continue to rent space to creative economy businesses.

The City and its nonprofit partners should work with business and property owners to make sure that appropriate space types and price points are maintained in the coming years. Buildings like the Knights of Malta building at 341-343 Medford Street are uniquely well-suited to production, fabrication and craft manufacturing businesses, which generally require high ceilings, freight elevators, loading docks, and high-capacity electrical systems. As the creative economy has expanded over the last decade, it has become clear that Somerville's zoning regulations are not well-suited to supporting preservation and expansion of these critical

spaces. This plan recommends zoning reform to encourage adaptation of existing buildings for creative economy uses, and discourages conversion of these spaces to non-creative economy uses.

Clearly, landlords and property owners set lease rates and terms, and make business decisions that suit their needs. Targeted marketing and technical assistance will be needed to encourage property owners to continue to rent space to creative economy businesses. The City can and should play a role in data collection, analysis and marketing to help property owners understand the viability of the creative economy. For example, the City recently collaborated with the Somerville Arts Council to study space availability and lease rates for studio and production spaces in Somerville and in surrounding communities. This research effort found that studio and production space is in extremely high demand in Somerville. In fact, the per-square-foot lease rates for studios in certain neighborhoods are actually higher than retail or restaurant lease rates. Since the survey was conducted, the owner of a major studio building on Boston Avenue in Medford terminated leases for dozens of creative economy tenants, suggesting that studio and production space is at an even greater premium. The creative economy is not just a part of Somerville's arts and culture, it is increasingly a viable economic alternative for its business owners and their landlords.



A new storefront for Sarma restaurant under construction at the Litchfield Block building





Mayor Joe Curtatone and residents of the Gilman Square neighborhood celebrate the Grand Opening of Ed Leathers Community Park on a former industrial site

“When asked to identify a favorite part of the Gilman Square plan, one survey respondent wrote: ‘Everything – let’s do it!’”

5

GILMAN SQUARE GETTING THINGS DONE

Plans succeed or fail in their implementation. Somerville by Design has created a new approach to neighborhood planning, and the Gilman Square Station Area Plan offers a fresh way to think about getting things done. Our January 8th “Plan Presentation” meeting brought 140 community members together to hold the design team accountable. Final draft designs were presented, and then a survey form was given to attendees to ask what they liked or didn’t like about the team’s work. A remarkable consensus emerged in favor of the design ideas for Gilman Square. When asked to identify a favorite part of the Gilman Square plan, one survey respondent wrote: “Everything – let’s do it!”.

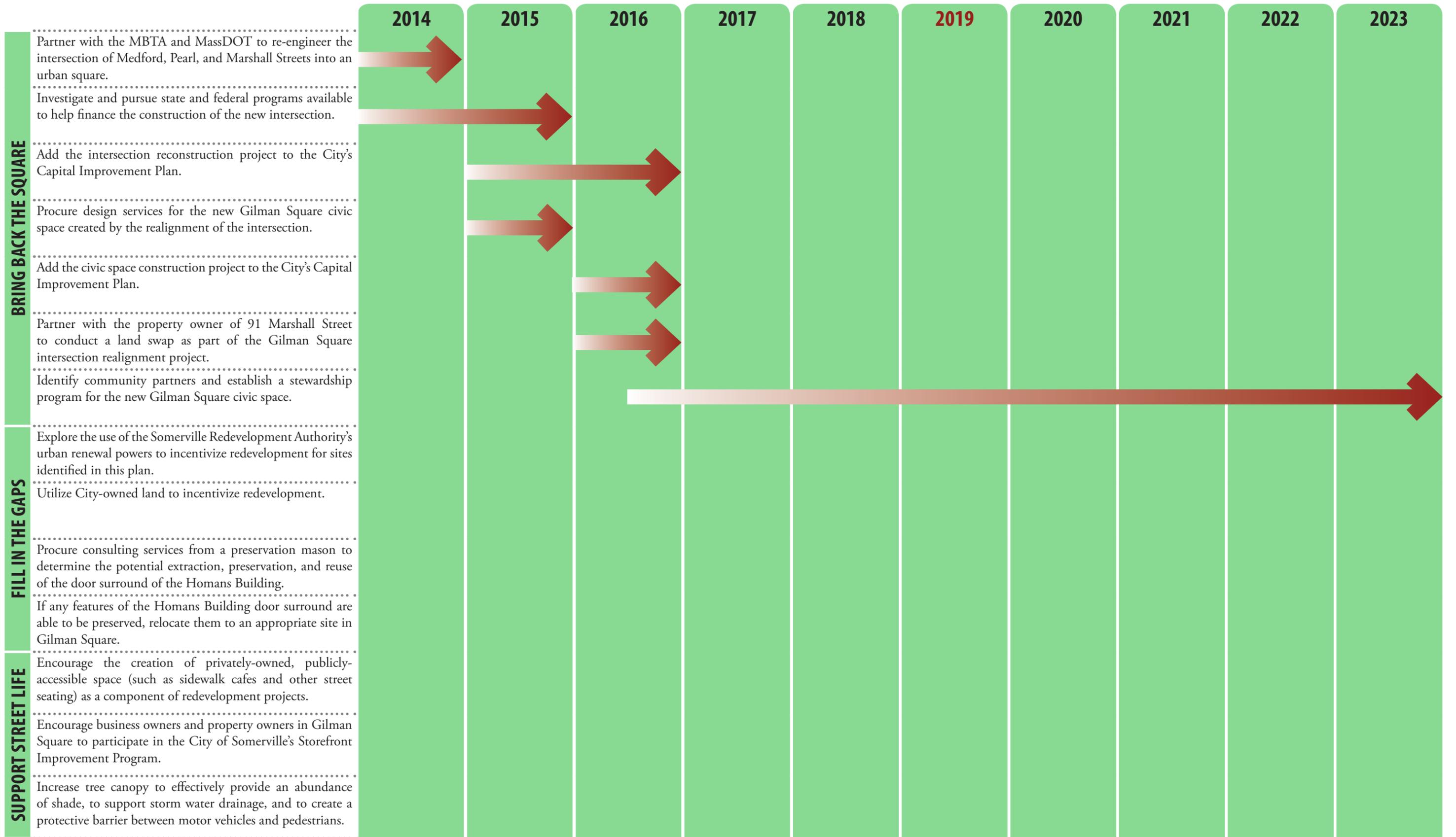
That type of confidence and clarity is typically missing from neighborhood plans. This chapter is formatted as a calendar with a ten-year horizon. For clarity’s sake, actions that need more than ten years are not included.

The calendar is built around the nine ideas our participants cared about most: bringing back the square; filling in the gaps; supporting street life; complete streets; civic spaces; attainable housing; smart parking policy; improved zoning; and supporting the local economy. Each of these nine principles is listed on the left side of the following pages, to create easy-to-use references back to Chapter 4.

To keep its recommendations realistic and achievable, the plan focuses on actions that can be accomplished by the City of Somerville. Each of the nine themes includes a short list of actions. There are 40 total actions. Of these, 34 can be accomplished by the City. Three actions require coordination and partnership with MassDOT and the MBTA. Three actions require coordination and partnership with private property owners or business owners.

To promote accountability for the City and its partners, a reader can simply look at a specific year on the calendar and understand which actions should be started, or should be completed by that time.

The year 2019 is highlighted in red. MassDOT and the MBTA have publicly committed to opening the Gilman Square Green Line Station for service by early 2019, which lends a sense of urgency to all the actions included in this Station Area Plan. Somerville residents must continue to advocate for completion of the Green Line Extension, but to truly achieve our community vision for Gilman Square, we must also ensure that certain actions are begun, or even completed by 2019. Change is coming to Gilman Square, and we have an opportunity to steer that change in a way that is consistent with our core values as a community. Let’s do it.



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
COMPLETE THE STREETS	Improve sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps identified as high priorities in the City's 2013 Curb and Ramp Inventory. (Neighborhood Street Reconstruction Program)									
	Design and install way-finding signage to guide residents and visitors to and from the new Gilman Square station and new civic space.									
	Support the MBTA's efforts to design, build and maintain high-quality short- and long-term bicycle parking to encourage commuters to get to Gilman Station by bicycle.									
INVEST IN CIVIC SPACES	Partner with the MTBA and MassDOT to design a high-quality shared space at the lower entrance to the Gilman Square station.									
	Partner with the MBTA to design and construct the full Somerville Community Path from Lowell Street through Gilman Square to downtown Boston.									
	Identify Marshall St. Playground, Otis St. Playground and the Winter Hill Community School yard as candidates for improvements in the 2015 update of the Open Space Plan.									
	Investigate state and federal programs available to finance the Marshall St. Playground, Otis St. Playground, and Winter Hill Community School yard improvements.									
	Add improvements to Marshall Street Playground, Otis Street Playground and the Winter Hill Community School yard to the City's Capital Improvement Plan.									
PROMOTE ATTAINABLE HOUSING	If possible, expand Ed Leather Community Park to further the space as an asset to the neighborhood.									
	Prioritize station areas when distributing CDBG and other state or federal financing for lead abatement, housing rehabilitation, and energy efficiency assistance programs.									
	Require all new construction and rehabilitation projects of significant size within 1/4 mile of any operational rapid-transit station to provide at least 15% of units as affordable housing.									
	Partner with a developer to design, finance, and construct purpose-built affordable housing on at least one City-owned site within the core of Gilman Square.									
	Lead negotiations with private property owners to extend the long-standing contracts for senior housing at Pearl Street Park and Faulkner Tower to preserve existing affordable housing in Gilman Square									

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
ADOPT SMART PARKING POLICY	Reform zoning regulations to require off-street parking at a ratio of 1.0 space per unit, regardless of bedroom count.									
	Adopt a transit-oriented off-street parking reduction of 0.5 spaces for any property within 1/4 mile of any operational rapid-transit station.									
	Eliminate off-street parking requirements for first-floor retail uses within 1/4 mile of any operational rapid-transit station.									
	Establish retail-oriented, metered parking spaces in the core of Gilman Square along Medford, Pearl, and Marshall Streets where appropriate.									
	Require tuck-under or structured parking for all new construction in the core of Gilman Square.									
IMPROVE ZONING REGULATION	Permit the street frontage of properties to count toward parking requirements.									
	Create a new "Neighborhood Square" zoning district that requires first floor commercial activities and four-story, mixed-use buildings.									
	Reform zoning regulations to encourage the adaptation of existing buildings for commercial, fabrication and artist-oriented live-work space in the core of Gilman Square.									
	Promote flexibility in the Neighborhood Square zoning district by permitting a range of allowed building types.									
	Promote predictability in the Neighborhood Square zoning district by requiring by-right building types to meet specific design standards.									
	Create a new "Neighborhood Residence" zoning district that implements the recommendations of the City's 2012 "Residence A / Residence B Technical Report".									
	Incorporate any new districts generated by this Station Area plan into the structure and format of the new zoning ordinance called for by SomerVision.									
Permit "fabrication" uses, including visual arts, performing arts and small-scale manufacturing, and establish standards for live-work units for certified artists and fabricators.										

SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Encourage businesses to locate in the core of Gilman Square that cater to local residents' daily and weekly shopping and service needs.

Preserve certain older commercial buildings in the core of Gilman Square to maintain a diverse mix of price points for commercial space.

Provide storefront improvement grants to businesses in Gilman Square.

Promote and expand the City of Somerville's technical assistance programs for small businesses, including business plan assistance, financial literacy training, licensing and permitting guidance, marketing support, and tenant-landlord matching.

Support the arts and cultural community by disseminating information related to City- sponsored technical assistance, existing and proposed artists spaces, open studios and other special events, and local support organizations and municipal programs.

2014

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